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PROCLUS AND THE *CHALDEAN ORACLES*

A STUDY ON PROCLEAN EXEGESIS, WITH A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY OF PROCLUS' *TREATISE ON CHALDEAN PHILOSOPHY*

Nicola Spanu

ROUTLEDGE

Proclus and the *Chaldean Oracles*

This volume examines the discussion of the *Chaldean Oracles* in the work of Proclus, as well as offering a translation and commentary of Proclus' *Treatise On Chaldean Philosophy*.

Spanu assesses whether Proclus' exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles* can be used by modern research to better clarify the content of Chaldean doctrine or must instead be abandoned because it represents a substantial misinterpretation of originary Chaldean teachings. The volume is augmented by Proclus' Greek text, with English translation and commentary.

Proclus and the Chaldean Oracles will be of interest to researchers working on Neoplatonism, Proclus and theurgy in the ancient world.

Nicola Spanu wrote a PhD thesis on Plotinus and his Gnostic disciples and took part in a postdoctoral project on Byzantine cosmology and its relation to Neoplatonism. He has worked as an independent researcher on his second academic publication, which has focused on Proclus and the *Chaldean Oracles*.

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Introduction

0.1 The *Chaldean Oracles* and Proclus

The *Chaldean Oracles* (Χαλδαϊκά λόγια) have come down to us in highly fragmentary form. É. des Places' edition[1] contains 227 fragments in hexameter verse, of which 186 are authentic, 17 doubtful, while 24 consist in a single word. The biggest number of them has been discovered in Proclus' Platonic commentaries. Damascius has also preserved a considerable number of oracular sayings[2] in his treatise *On the Principles*, in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*[3] and in that on the *Phaedo*.[4] For both authors, the *Chaldean Oracles* are a divine revelation,[5] and they refer to them with the objective of showing the agreement of their own philosophy, of the doctrines of Plato, Pythagoras and Orpheus as well as of Greek traditional religion with the Oracles (Λόγια) revealed by the gods through their earthly representatives.[6] These are called 'theurgists' (θεουργοί), literally 'those who operate on the gods', and were believed by Neo-Platonists from Iamblichus onwards to be mediators between man and the gods.[7] The connection between the theurgists and the *Chaldean Oracles* is shown by the fact that the authentic fragment 153 des Places regards them as a spiritual elite capable of breaking the bonds that bind humanity to the world of becoming governed by inflexible Necessity.

With regard to the adjective 'Chaldean', this never appears in the extant fragments, while Proclus uses the expression 'Chaldean Oracles' (Χαλδαϊκά λόγια);[8] he also seems to use the substantive 'Chaldeans' (Χαλδαῖοι) to refer to the authors of the Oracles,[9] since in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic* he mentions 'the theurgists of the Chaldeans' (οἱ παρὰ Χαλδαιοίς θεουργοὶ).[10] We know that in Hellenistic culture the term 'Chaldeans' referred to those astrologers[11] who wandered about the Roman Empire offering their services to rich clients.[12] But, as fragment 107 des Places clearly shows, the *Chaldean Oracles* did not have a positive opinion of astrology, so we can assume that, if this designation accompanied the Λόγια since the time they were written and was not a later addition, it was used to indicate their supposed Oriental provenance, of which the Neo-Platonists were generally aware, since they often referred to their authors as the 'Assyrians' or simply the 'Barbarians'.[13]

With regard to the authorship and date of composition of the *Chaldean Oracles*, Suda's *Lexicon* provides us with valuable information. It says that Julian the Theurgist, son of Julian the Chaldean,[14] lived at the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–180 A.D.) and authored, in addition to works on *Theurgy* (Θεουργικά) and *Telestics* (Τελεστικά), '*Oracles* in hexameter verse' (Λόγια δι' ἐπῶν). As we have seen, the term 'Oracles' (Λόγια) was the one used by Neo-Platonists to refer to the *Chaldean Oracles*.[15] Scholarly consensus terminates at this point, since while H. Lewy[16] thought that the two *Juliani*, father and son, co-authored the *Chaldean Oracles*, H. D. Saffrey, on the basis of a strictly philological interpretation of Suda's text, came to the conclusion that Julian the Theurgist was their sole author.[17] There is no doubt that Saffrey's interpretation is much more philologically correct than Lewy's. However, a testimony from Psellus[18] adduced by Saffrey himself[19] – according to which Julian the Chaldean had recourse to the hieratic art to make both the gods and Plato's soul speak through his son (who then really performed the role of oracle or prophet[20] of this new divine revelation) – could be a sign that Julian the Chaldean's contribution to his son's endeavour to organize the Oracles of the gods in a coherent whole was not negligible; it is in this special sense that he could be said to have co-authored them. Probably the best choice in this regard is to follow des Places and consider the *Chaldean Oracles* as an anonymous text,[21] or to speak of 'authors' of the Oracles in the plural as we have sometimes chosen to do, in order to show that collecting and putting in writing the Oracles of the gods must have been the result of a collective effort.

This is the tradition that Proclus, born in Constantinople in 412 from rich parents,[22] came into contact with when he became disciple of Syrianus in Athens,[23] which he preferred to Alexandria where for a time he had studied rhetoric and philosophy, because of lack of decent teachers of philosophy in that city.[24] After the death of his master Syrianus,[25] he became head of the Platonic Academy of Athens in around 437,[26] dying there in 485.[27]

In his *Life of Proclus*, Marinus, disciple and biographer of Proclus, reports that his master had studied the *Chaldean Oracles* almost by himself, since Syrianus had died before Proclus' disagreement with his fellow disciple Domninus whether their common master had to explain to them the *Chaldean Oracles* or the Orphic texts was resolved.[28] As a consequence, when Syrianus died, Proclus had been taught by his master only the 'elements' (στοιχεῖα) of Chaldean wisdom.[29] To obtain a deeper knowledge of the Oracles, which he regarded as a text of immense value comparable only to Plato's *Timaeus*,[30] he made use of 'the best Commentaries on the God-given Oracles' (τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ὑπομνημάτων εἰς τὰ θεοπαράδοτα λόγια), namely Porphyry's and Iamblichus's ἐξηγήσεις,[31] of the *Chaldean Oracles* themselves[32] as well as of Chaldean 'premises' (ὑποθέσεις) (probably the introductory material given to him by Syrianus)[33]; it took him five years to complete the study of these sources.[34] There is no doubt that Proclus wrote extensively on the *Chaldean Oracles*,[35] even if no ancient author mentions a Proclean

'Commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*': Marinus simply says that Proclus 'put together' (συνελών) the material previously described, while Suda[36] attributes to him a text entitled *Agreement of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato with the* Oracles, which has been shown to be by Syrianus. The five extracts where Proclus explains the *Chaldean Oracles* which were excerpted by Psellus are simply entitled (with all probability by the excerptor himself) *On Chaldean Philosophy* (Πρόκλου ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς χαλδαϊκῆς φιλοσοφίας).[37]

In conclusion, our knowledge of both the *Chaldean Oracles* as they have been preserved by Proclus and of his interpretation of them (but a similar discourse could be made with regard to Damascius' interpretation)[38] is limited for three reasons:

1 Proclus' quotations are generally very short (notable exceptions are fragments 39, 49, 61, 146 and especially 37 des Places); this deprives us of useful information on the Chaldean system.
2 In their commentaries on the Platonic dialogues, Proclus and Damascius confine themselves to quoting the Oracles to show that either their own philosophical positions or exegeses of Plato conform to what had been revealed by the gods through the theurgists.[39]
3 The difficulty in establishing the original context of each fragment, since the same fragments are sometimes quoted either by the same author in different contexts or by different authors.[40]

0.2 A brief introductory comparison between Proclus' and the *Chaldean Oracles*' metaphysics

In this book we will discuss many aspects of Proclus' metaphysical system and compare it closely with the Chaldean one. However, we will not do this systematically since the objective of this book is not to compare the two systems (this work has already been done by other authors)[41] but to discuss Proclus' exegesis of Chaldean doctrine, which refers to Chaldean metaphysics only in a few cases and not always to discuss metaphysical problems, but also to elucidate completely different matters. This state of affairs has also forced us to resort to other ancient authors, in particular to Damascius' *On the Principle* and *Commentary on the Parmenides*, to clarify specific aspects of Chaldean metaphysics relevant to Proclus' exegesis but that he either does not discuss or confines himself to merely hinting at. A case in point in this regard is that of the first Chaldean fragment that will be analyzed in this book (fragment 4 des Places), where it is made mentioned of the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect but which Proclus makes use of not to discuss the nature of the first principles, but to elucidate that of daemons, since he thinks that as the divine hypostasis Power has the middle rank between the divine hypostases of the Father and the Intellect, so the daemons are placed in a median position between gods and men. It must be said that Proclus' way of proceeding can at times appear disconcerting to a modern

reader, because he establishes connections between contexts that from a modern perspective should be considered as unrelated. However, this is not so for Proclus: for him everything relates to everything though at different degrees; this means that the hierarchies that structure the higher dimensions of Being also appear at inferior levels; in this respect Proclus agrees with the Hermetic and evangelical principle 'as above, so below'. Regarding the case of fragment 4 des Places mentioned previously, we have resorted heavily on Damascius to illustrate the relationship between the monadic and triadic dimensions of Chaldean metaphysics, which unfortunately Proclus does not elucidate with the same clarity as his successor at the helm of the Platonic academy at Athens. We have also thought it useful for the reader to show the similarities existing between Chaldean metaphysics and the metaphysical conceptions of coeval systems, such as the Gnostic and the Hermetic ones. Although a close analysis of these similarities cannot be performed in this book, we have thought that the fact of listing them in the endnotes could stimulate further research on them. In order to help the reader to better understand Proclus' interpretation of Chaldean metaphysics, we will now briefly compare the two systems. In this concise introduction, we will confine ourselves to listing what we believe are the most important aspects of both systems, a preliminary knowledge of which could help the reader to better understand Proclus' exegesis. In doing so, we have benefited greatly from the introductions to Proclus' metaphysics currently available, to which we refer the interested reader.[42] We have also prepared a synopsis of the Proclean and Chaldean system, which will help the reader to identify the several divine entities mentioned throughout the book.

Proclus' system is centred around the One, which represents the highest divine hypostasis, the Principle from which Being as a whole and, through its mediation, every single being comes from. The One transcends Being as well as each single being but is at the same time present in both, since they exist by participation in it. If, as giver of existence to all existents, the One plays the role of efficient cause, as the final aim to which all beings tend, it represents the universal final cause, since everything aims at going back to the source of its own being. For Proclus, the One is also identical with the Platonic Good, since it not only generates all beings but also keeps them in existence: this is so because it communicates to each single one of them their unitary nature, according to which each *one* of them *is* a specific individual; for Proclus, only what is endowed with a minimum degree of oneness can exist, while what is deprived of it is inevitably led to nonexistence. The unlimited simplicity and oneness of the One makes it *absolute* in the etymological sense of the word, namely free from all relations with inferior beings. This also implies that it is totally incomprehensible to them, since even the tiniest degree of multiplicity establishes an insurmountable gulf between the beings that possess it and the One.

This is the case of the higher henads, which represent the 'beings' closest to the One, since they possess oneness to a degree superior to that of the

beings inferior to them. Modern research has not established yet whether the henads transcend Being or are instead inferior to it, since Proclus seems to defend both positions and place the henads both above and below Being, which according to him arises as a consequence of the interaction of the primordial couple of opposites, Limit–Unlimitedness, in turn coming into existence from the One. It is not even clear whether the henads are above the triad Limit – Unlimitedness – Being or inferior to Limit–Unlimitedness but superior to Being.[43] Coming now to the higher hypostases of the Chaldean metaphysical system, the henads are absent from it while a principle equivalent to the Proclean One seems to be present, since from our analysis (see later, Chapter 1) it emerges that the *Chaldean Oracles* gave the Father both the role of supreme monad and that of first member of the triad Father – Power – Intellect. It does not seem that there is any Chaldean equivalent to the Proclean triad Limit – Unlimitedness – Being.

From Being arises a second triad, namely Being – Life – Intellect. Each member of this triad in turn manifests itself in a triad, so that we will have three triads in total which will constitute the Proclean equivalent to Plato's *hyperuranion* or world of intelligible Ideas. Each of these three intelligible triads retains the main characteristics of the member of the triad Being – Life – Intellect from which they arise and are placed hierarchically the one below the other; this, however, does not prevent them from being mutually inclusive; for example, the first triad, placed under the preeminence of Being, must also be considered as alive and thinking, because in order to be alive and think one must first be: Being then includes both Life and Intellect; similarly, the second triad is placed under the preeminence of Life but it also is and thinks, since being alive implies the fact of being and is in turn necessary condition for the act of thinking; finally the third one, under the preeminence of Intellect, must be and live in order to think. With the three intelligible triads of the Proclean system as they are included in the triad Being – Life – Intellect could be compared the first triad of the Chaldean one, namely Father – Power – Intellect. In the Chaldean system, the goddess Hecate sometimes takes the place of Power in her role of universal feminine principle, while the Father in turns represents the masculine one, but this goddess also manifests herself at inferior levels of the hierarchy of Being.

Below the intelligible triads Proclus places other three triads, which are both intelligible and intellective and represent a further degree of removal from the One. They are not simply archetypical models of sensible beings as the intelligible triads but also thinking beings, and, as a consequence, immersed even more than their intelligible counterparts in the realm of multiplicity, since the act of thinking must differentiate, at least in principle, the thinking subject from the object thought, even if at this level subject and object coincide, since Intellect contains in itself all the intellectual ideas (the objects of his own thought) he thinks of. To these intelligible and intellectual triads correspond three Chaldean triads, namely Iynges, Connectors and Teletarchs, which play the role of bridging the gap

between the intelligible dimension and the inferior, intellectual, one. This is divided by Proclus into two triads, followed by a monad. The first is made-up of the gods Chronos – Rhea – Zeus, the second of the three Curetes, gods of traditional Greek mythology, while the seventh and last entity separates the intellectual dimension from the psychic one, pertaining to the Soul. At the intellectual level the Chaldean system places several entities, some of them identical with those mentioned by Proclus: the dyad Chronos – Rhea, Aion and Time, followed by Eros and a 'girdling membrane', equivalent to the Proclean separating monad (on this see later Chapters 2 and 3). At the intellectual level Proclus also places the Demiurge of both Soul and sensible world, which appears with the same role in the Chaldean system as well (see Chapters 1 and 2).

As in Proclus' system, so in the Chaldean one the World Soul gives existence to a multiplicity of individual souls arranged hierarchically according to their removal from the material world. The individual souls that are more removed from it are for Proclus the hyper-cosmic gods, which he arranges in four triads corresponding to the *azonoi* of the Chaldean system, namely the gods above the 'zones' or planetary spheres. Below them Proclus places the hyper-cosmic–encosmic gods (for which we have no Chaldean equivalent) followed by the encosmic gods, namely the seven visible planets, called *zonaioi* in the Chaldean system. At a lower level, both for *Proclus and the* Chaldean Oracles, are placed the angelic hierarchies, followed by the daemonic ones (see Chapter 3). Man is placed at the bottom of the hierarchy because of his fall from the divine realm (see Chapter 4). Though immersed in the material dimension, man can rediscover his celestial origin by virtue of the tools made available to him by both philosophy and theurgy. The latter is for both *Proclus and the* Chaldean Oracles indispensable to allow man to be freed from the clutch of evil matter and her daemons and go back to his real home in heaven (see Chapter 4).

0.3 A concise assessment of the disagreement of current literature concerning the first principles of Chaldean metaphysics

Here we will confine ourselves to make some examples of the impasse in which current literature has found itself with regard to its assessment of the first principles of Chaldean metaphysics, in particular of the Chaldean divine monad and triad, given that a critical evaluation of the achievements of modern research on the *Chaldean Oracles* since the time of Kroll's publication of his critical edition of them at the end of the 19th century would require a publication of its own.

In the first chapter of the book, we will see how the extant Chaldean fragments present the divine principle as a paternal monad that manifests itself in a triad, to be precise, in the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect; as a consequence, the Chaldean divine Father should play the role of both supreme monad and first member of the triad Father – Power – Intellect

emanated from Him. This interpretation is based on H. Lewy's,[44] a pioneering researcher on the *Chaldean Oracles*, who however was not followed by all the authors that came after him. P. Merlan's position on this topic is not very clear, but he seems to follow Lewy,[45] while H. D. Saffrey explicitly agrees with him in believing that the *Chaldean Oracles* posited the One as supreme principle,[46] and the same does P. Hadot.[47] J. D. Turner considers the identification of the Chaldean Father with Numenius' First Intellect advanced by Dillon *et alii* as a mere assumption,[48] but, in another part of his important article on the relationship of the Oracles with the Gnostic treatises of the Sethian sect,[49] he asks himself whether it could be possible that for the Oracles the Father regarded as supreme monad transcends the Father as part of the triad Father – Power – Intellect; my answer to his question is obviously affirmative. Brisson does not take a definitive stance on whether the Chaldean Father coincides with Numenius' First Intellect or with the Good of Plato's *Republic* and the One of the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*.[50]

On the contrary, in his *The Middle-Platonists*, Dillon, in line with A. J. Festugière,[51] explicitly identifies the Chaldean Father with the First Intellect of Numenius' system,[52] but, just a couple of pages below, he links Him with Eudorus's First Principle, which was very close to the Neo-Platonic One, saying that 'the radical monism of Chaldean metaphysics' is 'analogous to that which we discerned in Eudorus, who also derives Matter from the Supreme Principle'.[53] Dillon builds on the seminal paper by E. R. Dodds, *New Light on the Chaldean Oracles*,[54] where this author does not take a definitive stance on the nature of the Chaldean Father, simply saying that some fragments seem to identify Him with Numenius' First Intellect, while others place Him above it. R. Majercik follows Dillon and, though tentatively, identifies the Chaldean Father with the First Intellect.[55] This author is also critical of the idea that the *Chaldean Oracles* admitted a divine monad at all, since she thinks that 'it cannot be known with certainty' whether the idea that fragment 27 des Places expresses (the government of the triad by the monad) reflects 'a general law of reality', though she deems it as 'of course, possible'.[56] J. F. Finamore and S. I. Johnston follow the same approach in their synopsis of the Chaldean system: 'The Intellect is the highest God (*scil.* of the Oracles)',[57] and the same does H. Seng, author of the more recent introduction to the *Chaldean Oracles*.[58]

Another aspect of Chaldean metaphysics in which there is no scholarly agreement is the existence of the concept of triad in the Oracles. In her edition and English translation of them,[59] R. Majercik rightly points out[60] that 'triads of this type antedate Porphyry, since similar triads appear in the Gnostic sources known to Plotinus and his School'; on the contrary, in her fundamental article *Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations*,[61] she believes them to be the result of Neo-Platonic speculation, starting from Porphyry, so well after the time in which the Oracles were supposedly put to writing. It is also surprising that, on the one hand,

Majercik considers the triad 'Father – Power – Intellect' as invented by Neo-Platonists, while in the same article she herself says: 'That a triadic principle of some sort informed the teaching of the Oracles is evident'.[62] It would seem to be consequential to think that if the Oracles did make use of triadic principles (of which we have clear proofs in frgs. 27, 28 and 29 des Places), these should have been used by them to explain all levels of reality, which is what fr. 27 des Places actually does: 'In every world there shines a triad over which a monad rules'. In this regard it is also important to take into consideration Damascius' testimony (*On the Principles*, I. 85, 196, 5 Ruelle), since he explicitly says that 'the Chaldeans' speak of 'paternal triads' (εἴτε ὡς οἱ Χαλδαῖοι πατρικᾶς τριάδας ἀνευφημοῦντες).[63] With regard to the problem of triads, Seng appears much more cautious in denying their presence in the *Chaldean Oracles*,[64] while Brisson speaks explicitly of 'triad' with regard to the first Chaldean triad: 'cette triade, en quoi consiste le Dieu'.[65] Finally, Turner uses the concept of 'triads' with regard to the *Chaldean Oracles* throughout his fundamental study, *The Chaldean Oracles and the Metaphysics of the Sethian Platonizing Treatises*.[66]

As we will show in the next paragraph, a reconsideration of the importance of Neo-Platonic exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles* appears in our opinion as a useful tool in order to overcome the *impasse* in which current literature has found itself concerning this and other topics, which are not listed here for sake of brevity.[67]

0.4 The purpose of this book

This passage from P. Hadot's *Bilan et perspectives sur les Oracles Chaldaïques*, a contribution to the third edition by M. Tardieu of H. Lewy's seminal work *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*,[68] summarizes very well the objective that this book intends to achieve:

> Until now scholars have almost always confined themselves to gleaning scattered fragments of the Chaldean Oracles from the writings of the Neo-Platonists and to reassembling them on the basis of a more or less systematic order by separating them from their context. But they must now be placed back inside their context: one must study how the Neo-Platonists have conceived of and commented on the Oracles. . . . It must also be studied the way in which each Neo-Platonist has conceived of and made use of the Oracles: in which text of his he did that; in which precise context; which Oracle he quoted; why and how he has quoted it, which interpretation he gave to it.

P. Hadot clearly shows that until now the Neo-Platonic exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles* has been considered more a hindrance than an opportunity to obtain precious information on the fragments' original meaning.[69] This situation is evident in É. des Places' edition, where each fragment is presented

without the context in which it was quoted, and only partially solved by R. Majercik's edition and translation of the Oracles (based on des Places').[70] This book intends to follow a different path and to analyze the Chaldean fragments quoted by Proclus together with Proclus' interpretation of them, in order to assess whether Proclean exegesis could help modern research to deepen its knowledge of the *Chaldean Oracles* or must instead be abandoned because it departs too much from the Chaldean original doctrine.

Each Chaldean fragment (which we have written in bold typeface) quoted by Proclus has been translated together with a considerable part of its context. By doing so, we have been able to achieve two objectives:

1 To describe and explain Proclus' interpretation of the Chaldean fragments he quotes or, when he merely cites the Oracles without offering any exegesis of them, to describe in what way he makes use of them to elucidate his own philosophical arguments.
2 To better understand Chaldean doctrine through the help of Proclus' exegesis of it.

Of course, the second objective is achievable only if Proclus' interpretation is regarded as in line with the Chaldean doctrine's original meaning and not a distortion of it. But, one can object, how is it possible to assess this, given that the text of the *Chaldean Oracles* is not extant and that our only way of accessing them is through the works of the Neo-Platonists in which very limited portions of it are quoted? In the preceding paragraph of this introduction, it has been shown that the literature's traditional approach of analyzing the Chaldean fragments outside the context in which they are quoted, though greatly advancing our knowledge of them, has substantially come to an impasse concerning fundamental points of Chaldean doctrine. In order to try to escape this *cul-de-sac*, we have followed a methodology that could be summarized as follows: to combine the great achievements of current literature on not only *Proclus and the* Chaldean Oracles but also other coeval philosophical-theological systems (Neo-Pythagoreanism, Orphism, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Early Christianity, Middle and Neo-Platonism, Mithraism, Isis and Osiris cult, etc.) with what can be achieved through an hermeneutical analysis of Proclus' interpretation of the *Chaldean Oracles*.

Our methodology refuses the *a priori* idea that Proclus' exegesis always deviates from the Oracles' original meaning, but tries to assess whether this is in line with what we know with a certain degree of certainty about Chaldean doctrine on a *case by case* basis. By doing so, we have been capable of reaching a general conclusion whether Proclus is a faithful interpreter of the Oracles or not, a conclusion, of course, which remains open to both the findings of other authors and to the discovery of new Chaldean fragments. To briefly summarize it here, we can say that for us Proclus is most of the times faithful to the literal meaning of the oracular fragments he quotes,

except in a few cases that have been explicitly pointed out in the book (his interpretation of fragment 175 des Places is a case in point).

Of course, Proclus' approach as an exegete is completely different from that of a modern interpreter of the Oracles, and this fact must always be taken into account. Apart from his treatise on the *Chaldean Oracles*, which is not extant and that we have translated and commented on in this book, he quotes oracular fragments to elucidate either his own philosophical conceptions or his own interpretations of Plato's dialogues, showing that his Platonic exegesis is in line with what has been revealed by the gods of the Oracles through the theurgists. As already said, sometimes Proclus interprets the Chaldean fragments he quotes – and, when he does so, the reader must be aware of the fact that in these cases we are dealing with an interpretation (that of the specific Chaldean fragment quoted) which is carried out within the context of the broader exegesis of Plato's dialogues, while at other times he confines himself to citing them, probably because he thought that their interpretation was self-evident to his readers. In addition to this, Proclus interprets both Plato and the Oracles on the basis of the exegetical principle that the different philosophical and religious currents of the Hellenistic world he lived in (apart, of course, from Christianity) were diverse expressions of basically the same doctrine, so that if they not always agreed in details, they would do so in the fundamental aspects of their content.

Proclus couples this exegetical approach with his strictly philosophical one, which brings him to subject the *Chaldean Oracles* to a level of systematization and rationalization that, we can say this with relative certainty, did not belong to the Oracles, which, though not alien to philosophy (being influenced mostly by Stoicism and coeval Platonism) were not a philosophical but a poetical expression of the divine revelation of which its supposed authors were the bearers. This fact, which is generally pointed out to show that Proclus distorts the original meaning of Chaldean doctrine, in our opinion does not make his oracular exegesis useless for modern research, and this at least for three reasons:

1 Proclus was not alien to the conceptual world of the Oracles as a modern interpreter may be but shared with it the same Stoic, Platonic and Hellenistic background.
2 Even if the metaphysical system of the *Chaldean Oracles* does not possess the same level of complexity and articulation as the Proclean one (and this can be easily explained by pointing out that Proclus' works have a strictly philosophical connotation that the Oracles do not have, though they resort to philosophical arguments at times), the two systems share many fundamental concepts (as we have shown earlier in our brief comparison of them).
3 Proclus' departs from the literal meaning of the Oracles in a few cases (which have been pointed out in the book), the limited number of which does not invalidate the overall correctness of his interpretation.

We are fully aware that any attempt to establish the 'correctness' of the interpretation of whatsoever text, be it ancient or modern, is matter of debate, but we also know that any scientific achievement requires the constant assessment and reassessment of scientific hypotheses which are considered as acceptable until new ones disprove them: this is true for any science, hermeneutics of late antique philosophical texts included.

0.5 Some methodological and hermeneutical considerations

This study presents each fragment of des Places' edition together with a sufficient portion of the context in which Proclus quoted it. The numeration of the fragments of des Places' edition has been maintained, but the order in which they are presented has been changed. We have provided the reader with the translations of the Proclean passages in which the Chaldean fragments are quoted: all translations are mine unless differently specified. The Chaldean fragments are written in bold typeface to differentiate them from the Proclean text. The commentary on each fragment has been written having in mind the goals set by P. Hadot in his article. All Greek texts quoted have been taken from the critical editions published in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae – A Digital Library of Greek Literature*.[71]

As it has been pointed out by H. Seng,[72] des Places' edition is all but flawless, since the French scholar has not published all Chaldean fragments quoted by Neo-Platonists or later interpreters like the Byzantine intellectual Michael Psellus; on our part, when it happened to us to discover what could possibly be a new oracular fragment that does not appear in des Places' collection, we have pointed that out explicitly. As a consequence of this state of affairs, H. Seng rightly calls for a new, major edition of the *Chaldean Oracles*, where each fragment is quoted together with the context in which it appears, which is exactly the same methodology we have followed in this contribution, even if we have confined ourselves to discussing the Chaldean fragments quoted by Proclus.[73]

In systematizing the oracular fragments, we have not followed des Places' method (largely based on Kroll's),[74] but we have organized them according to four main thematic areas (which correspond to the first four chapters of the book); they are the following:

1 The Chaldean triad.
2 The single divine hypostases.
3 The world's intellectual archetype and the creation of the material dimension.
4 Man and his destiny.

The quadripartite structure of the book assumes that this was the original textual structure of the *Chaldean Oracles*; this hypothetical reconstruction is based on two principles:

1 The close comparison of the Chaldean fragments with Proclus' exegesis of them.
2 The fact that coeval revealed texts (we can think, for example, of the Hermetic *Poimandres*, of some texts of the Gnostic Nag-Hammadi Library, such as the *Apocryphon of John*, or even of early Christian literature, like the *Gospel of John*) start first with a description of the divine principle, deal then with the structure of the divine world and end with the creation of the material dimension and the role of man in it. Of course, a detailed reconstruction of the possible original structure of the text of the Chaldean Oracles would belong more to a new edition of them than to a publication like this one, so that this must be regarded as a mere working hypothesis.

In the fifth chapter, we have also given a translation and commentary of the five extant extracts from Proclus' treatise *On Chaldean Philosophy*. This is the first systematic study so far of this fascinating testimony of Proclus' interpretation of the *Chaldean Oracles*.

The hermeneutical approach of the book can be summarized as follows:

1 To compare the extant Chaldean fragments with coeval religious traditions such as[75] Hermeticism, Magic and Theurgy, traditional Greek religion, late Orphism, Gnosticism, Early Christianity (Synesius of Cyrene). Of course, the work of comparative analysis that has been conducted here is all but exhaustive; in order for it to be so, it would be necessary to devote a series of monographical studies specifically to this goal.
2 To study Proclus' interpretation of the Oracles by considering both the modern historicocritical approach to ancient exegesis and Proclus' own attitude towards the *Chaldean Oracles*, since it must never be forgotten that these are for him a divine revelation worthy of the utmost respect and veneration.
3 To investigate the relationship between Proclus and the Chaldean tradition with the objective of assessing whether or not (or, in both cases, to what extent) Proclus' interpretation can be regarded as a reliable source of information on Chaldean theology and philosophy.
4 To assess, in case of a partially or totally negative answer to the previous question, whether Proclus' interpretation of the Oracles must instead be understood as a late attempt to 'rationalize' and/or 'systematize' the Chaldean tradition.
5 To establish to what extent Proclus' exegesis of Chaldean doctrine can be detached from its original and most authentic meaning or whether or not this is an impossible task for modern research, given both our second-hand knowledge of the tradition and its highly fragmentary nature.

0.6 Final considerations

Although more than a century has passed since the first critical edition of the *Chaldean Oracles* by Kroll, scholarly research on them could be regarded as

still in its infancy. A lot remains to be done, starting from a complete edition of all oracular fragments together with their specific context and explanatory notes. There should also be undertaken a close comparison of the Chaldean tradition with coeval ones, with the objective of showing their common cultural and religious *milieu*. A step towards the achievement of this goal has been taken by the collection of articles on the *Chaldean Oracles* published under the supervision of H. Seng and other scholars in the series *Bibliotheca chaldaica* (Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg); until now, eight volumes have been published, including a monographical study by H. Seng.[76]

Through the mediation of the Byzantine polymath Michael Psellus (1017/1018–1078/1096), the influence of the *Chaldean Oracles* reached the European Renaissance, since many intellectuals[77] of that time came to regard the Chaldean revelation as one of the highest expressions of *philosophia perennis* (to use the expression of the Catholic bishop and humanist Agostino Steuco [1497/98–1548]),[78] that is, of that primordial religion of humanity directly revealed by God to Adam and which, before appearing in its final form in Christianity, manifested itself with the utmost clarity in the Oracles of the Chaldean gods.

Notes

1 *Oracula chaldaica*, É. des Places ed. and trans., 3rd ed. (Paris, 2010).
2 We use this expression as a synonymous of fragments throughout this work.
3 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis, In Platonis Parmenidem*, vols. 1–2, C. É. Ruelle ed. (Paris, 1889).
4 *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, L. G. Westernik ed., vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1977), 27–285.
5 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive: les Oracles Chaldaïques* (Turnhout, 2016), 19. J. F. Finamore–S. Iles Johnston, *The Chaldean Oracles*, in L. Gerson ed., *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010), 161.
6 C. Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (Abingdon, UK–New York, USA, 2016), 10 rightly points out 'the interconnected and mutually inclusive nature of rationality and revelation in the Chaldean system and within late Platonism.' See also H. D. Saffrey, *Accorder entre elles le traditions théologiques: une caractéristique du néoplatonisme athénienne*, in E. P. Bos–P. A. Mejier eds., *On Proclus and his Influence on Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1992), 35–50.
7 In his *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, G. Pasquali ed. (Leipzig, 1908), 122, 72, 10–11 Proclus identifies the authors of the *Oracles* with the theurgists who lived at the time of Marcus Aurelius (τοῖς ἐπὶ Μάρκου γενομένοις θεουργοῖς), placing them in the same time period as did the Suda, who is probably dependent on him (see note 14 later).
8 Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, in *Procli philosophi platonici opera inedita*, V. Cousin ed., pt. 3 (Hildesheim, 1864; repr. 1961), 800, 19 (. . . ἐν τοῖς Χαλδαικοῖς λογίοις).
9 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, E. Diehl ed., 3 vols. (1903–1904–1906, repr. Amsterdam, 1965). I. 208, 20; III, 111, 20; 124, 24; 125, 27; 151, 2. Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, W. Kroll ed., vols. 1–2 (Leipzig, 1899, repr. Amsterdam, 1965), II. 220, 11; 235, 26; 236, 1–5; 318, 13; 343, 4. Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 71, 32, 5–10; 34, 4 Pasquali.
10 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 220, 11 Kroll.

11 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 23.
12 They were those 'free-lance experts' whom H. Wendt talks of in her interesting book entitled *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Free-Lance Experts in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2016). See also I. Tanaseanu-Doebler, *Weise oder Scharlatane? Chaldaeerbilder der griechisch-römischen Kaiserzeit und die Chaldaeischen Orakel*, in H. Seng–M. Tardieu eds., *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel–Kontext, Interpetation, Rezeption* (Heidelberg, 2010), 19–42.
13 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 20.
14 Suda, *Lexicon*, A. Adler ed., vols. 1–4 (Leipzig, 1935), I 433; II 641, 32–33.
15 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 20.
16 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy–Troiseme edition par Michel Tardieu avec un supplement «Les Oracles Chaldaïques 1891–2011»* (Paris, 2011), 3–4.
17 H. D. Saffrey, Le néoplatoniciens et les: *Oracles Chaldaïques*: *Revue d' Etudes Augustiniennes* 27 (1981) 210–211, now in id., *Recherches sur le néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris, 1990), 63–79.
18 M. Psellus, *Philosophica minora I, Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia*, J. M. Duffy ed. (Stuttgart–Leipzig, 1992), I, 46, 43–51.
19 H. D. Saffrey, Le néoplatoniciens et les: *Oracles Chaldaïques* (1981), 218–219.
20 We think that the term 'medium' is inappropriate in this case, since it belongs to a kind of spirituality, namely Spiritism, that is alien to the *Chaldean Oracles*', which are *Oracles* of the gods, not of the spirits of the dead, *pace* E. R. Dodds, who was the first to have recourse to this (wrong) interpretation in his Theurgy and Its Relationship to Neo-Platonism: *The Journal of Roman Studies Part 1 and 2* (37) (1947), 65–69.
21 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica* (2010), 7.
22 Marinus, *Vita Procli sive de felicitate*, R. Masullo ed. (Naples, 1985), 2, 35. On Proclus' wealth see ibid., 2, 41.
23 Ibid., 11.
24 Ibid., 9–10.
25 On this see R. Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2012), 36.
26 Marinus, *Vita Procli*, 12, 310–312 Masullo.
27 R. Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (2012), 44.
28 Marinus, *Vita Procli*, 26, 610–619 Masullo.
29 Ibid., 611.
30 Ibid., 38, 915–919.
31 Ibid., 26, 622–623. See also H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 25–26.
32 Ibid., 623–624.
33 Ibid., 628.
34 Ibid., 630–631.
35 Ibid., 633–634.
36 Suda, *Lexicon*, IV. 478, 21–479, 8 Adler. On this see H. D. Saffrey, *Accorder entre elles le traditions théologiques*, in Bos–Mejier, *On Proclus and his Influence* (1992), 36–37.
37 On this, see later Chapter 5. It must be pointed out that this is the title that L. J. Rosan gives to this Proclean work; see id., *The Philosophy of Proclus: The Final Stage of Ancient Thought* (New York, 1949), 43.
38 We intend to write a monographical study to discuss Damascius' use and interpretation of the *Chaldean Oracles*.
39 On this see also H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 27–28, 37, 39.
40 See ibid., 37.
41 See later endnotes to Chapter 1, note 5.
42 L. J. Rosan, *The Philosophy of Proclus* (1949). W. Beierwaltes, *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik* (Frankfurt a. M., 1965). L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (Edinburgh, 1996). R. Chlup, *Proclus*

(2012). P. d'Hoine–M. Martin eds., *All from One: A Guide to Proclus* (2017), 207–222. D. Nikulin, *Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2019), especially part II dedicated to Proclus (pp. 119–203), which represents a good introduction to the fundamental themes of his philosophy.

43 See later endnotes to Chapter 1, note 18.
44 Id. *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 76–83, 106.
45 Id., Religion and Philosophy from Plato's *Phaedo* to the Chaldean Oracles: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (1) (1963) 174.
46 Id., Les Néoplatoniciennes et les Oracles Chaldaïques: *Revue d' Etudes Augustiniennes* (27) (1981), 223 (now in id., *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin* [Paris, 1990], 63–79).
47 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1968), 261 and note 1.
48 Id., *The Chaldean Oracles and the Metaphysics of the Sethian Platonizing treatises*, in J. D. Turner–K. Corrigan eds., *Plato's Parmenides and its Heritage, vol. 1: History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to later Platonism and Gnosticism* (Atlanta, 2010), 40.
49 Ibid., 41.
50 See Brisson's contributions listed later, endnotes to Chapter 1, note 5.
51 Id., *La révélation d'Hermes Trismégiste*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1950; repr. 1990), 53–54.
52 Id., *The Middle-Platonists* – 80 B.C. to A.D. 220 (Ithaca, NY, 1996), 393.
53 Ibid., 395. On Eudorus see ibid., 114–135.
54 *The Harvard Theological Review* 4 (54) (1961) 270.
55 Id., *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden–New York–København–Köln, 1989), 5–6.
56 Id., Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations: *The Classical Quarterly* 1 (51) (2001) 274.
57 Id., *The Chaldean Oracles*, in L. P. Gerson ed., *The Cambridge History* (2010), 162.
58 Id., *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 42.
59 Id., *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 142.
60 She quotes M. Tardieu, *La Gnose Valentinienne et les Oracles Chaldaïques*, in B. Layton ed., *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism–I: The School of Valentinus* (Leiden, 1983), 214–215.
61 *Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis* (2001), 277–278, 296.
62 Ibid., 296.
63 See also ibid., 84, 193, 26 (ὡς ἐν ταῖς χαλδαϊκαῖς τριάσιν); 90, 221, 23–24 (ἀλλὰ μὴν οἵ τε θεοὶ καὶ οἱ θεολόγοι τριάδας τε ἡμῖν ἀνυμνήκασι).
64 Id., *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 43.
65 Id., *La commentaire comme priére destinée a assurer la salut de l'ame*–La place et la rôle des Oracles Chaldaïques dan le commentaire sur le Timée de Platon par Proclus, in M. O. Goulet-Cazé ed., *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation*, Actes du Colloque International de l'Institute des Traditions textuelles (Paris et Villejuif, 22–25 septembre 1999) (Paris, 2000), 335. See also id., *La place des Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Théologie Platonicienne*, in A. Ph. Segonds–C. Steel eds. with the assistance of C. Luna and A. F. Mettraux, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne*–Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13–16 mai 1998) en l'honneur de H. D. Saffrey et L. G. Westernik (Leuven–Paris, 2000), 113 ('la triade fondamentale des *Oracles Chaldaïques* est la triade Père–Puissance–Intellect') and id., *Plato's Timaeus and the Chaldean Oracles*, in G. J. Reydams-Schils ed., *Plato's Timaeus as cultural Icon* (Notre Dame, IN, 2003), 119 ('This triad [the Father, Hecate, and the Demiurge], of which the divine principle consists').
66 Id., ibid. in Turner–Corrigan, *Plato's Parmenides and its Heritage* (2010), 39–58.
67 With regard to the scholarly disagreement on the nature of henads in Proclus see later endnotes to Chapter 1, note 18.
68 P. Hadot, *Bilan et perspectives sur les Oracles Chaldaïques*, in H. Lewy ed., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (Paris, 2011), *Compléments*, 715.

69 H. Seng agrees with Hadot; see id., *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 37.
70 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989).
71 http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/index.php
72 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 37.
73 Ibid.
74 *De oraculis Chaldaicis*, W. Kroll ed. (Breslau, 1894; repr. Hildesheim, 1962).
75 H. Lewy, author of the most important monograph on the *Chaldean Oracles* so far, was perfectly aware of the fact that this is all but an easy task: id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 75.
76 H. Seng, *ΚΟΣΜΑΓΟΙ, AZONOI, ZONAIOI* – Drei Begriffe chaldaeischer Kosmologie und ihr Fortleben (Heidelberg, 2009)
77 On this, see H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 31–35 as well as the following fundamental article: B. Tambrun-Krasker, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques* entre idéologie et critique (XVe–XVIIe s.), in A. Lecerf–L. Saudelli–H. Seng eds., *Oracles Chaldaïques: fragments et philosophie* (Heidelberg, 2014), 253–277.
78 On this, see M. Muccillo, *Platonismo, Ermetismo e "Prisca Theologia": Ricerche di storiografia filosofica rinascimentale* (Florence, 1996), 7–8.

1 The Chaldean triad

1.1 The triad Father – Power – Intellect

Fragment 4 des Places[1] = p. 13 Kroll[2] (Proclus, *In Alc.*, 83, 17–20–84, 1–17 Westernik)

> Concerning these things this must be said: it remains to discuss why Socrates says not that the hidden daemonic nature itself will later become known to the young man (*scil.* Alcibiades), but its power. For he speaks like this: 'whose power and nature you will learn later'. First of all one must pay attention to the fact that, as the divine Iamblichus says, it is more difficult for us, unless we have fully purified the intellect of the soul, to contemplate the substances of daemons and in general of superior beings, while it is easier (for us) both to discern and to explain their powers, since even to investigate the essential nature of the soul is not easy for everyone; Timaeus alone revealed the whole of its essence: 'that is to say, it is necessary an altogether and by all means divine and lengthy discussion,' as Socrates also observes in the *Phaedrus*. For we have a perception of them (*scil.* of daemons and superior beings) from their activities, of which their powers are specifically mothers; since power is midway between essence and activity, it being produced from essence while it produces activity. Secondly, we must observe that in another way as well power is conformable to the nature of daemons. Everywhere power has been allotted the middle place: among intelligibles it unites the Father with Intellect '**for Power is with Him but Intellect proceeds from Him**'; but among intellectual beings it connects activities with essences, because activity is a product of power, and essence produces power from itself.

In Plato's *First Alcibiades* 103A, Socrates says to the young Alcibiades that, contrary to those of his lovers who became a nuisance to him (ἐγένοντό σοι διαλεγόμενοι), he, for many years, did not even dare to address him, having been capable of doing so by virtue of a 'certain daemonic incompatibility' (δαιμόνιον ἐναντίωμα) 'whose power and nature' he 'will learn later' (οὗ σὺ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ὕστερον πεύσῃ).[3]

In the previous sections of his commentary on this Platonic passage (60, 1–83, 1–17), after passing references to the unifying power of love, the descent of the souls and the relationship between the Intellect and the Soul, Proclus had concentrated himself on describing the nature of daemons, which for him are souls endowed with a high, medium and low degree of perfection.[4] Here (83, 17–20–84, 1–17) he focuses his exegesis[5] on explaining why Socrates says that man can understand the daemons' power (δαιμονίον . . . δύναμιν) but not their nature.

Proclus thinks Socrates' words can be correctly interpreted in the light of Iamblichus' doctrine,[6] according to which it is easier for humans who have not cleansed 'the intellect of the Soul'[7] (τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς νοῦν) to understand the faculties (δυνάμεις) of daemons or superior beings in general than their substances (ὑπάρξεις).[8] As a consequence, Socrates is utterly justified in saying that Alcibiades, who has not achieved spiritual perfection, will learn the power of daemons but not their nature or essence. Power, Proclus adds, is 'midway between essence and activity' (μέση γὰρ ἡ δύναμίς ἐστι τῆς τε οὐσίας καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας)[9] and, for this reason, akin to daemons to the highest degree, since these are the mediators between men and gods.[10] Power has always the middle place: among intellectual beings (ἐν δὲ τοῖς νοεροῖς), it unites activities with essences;[11] among intelligible ones (ἐν μὲν τοῖς νοητοῖς), it links the Father with Intellect (συνάπτει τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν νοῦν), as it is also stated in the *Chaldean Oracles*, which assert that divine Power is with the Father, while divine Intellect proceeds from Him (ἡ μὲν γὰρ δύναμις σὺν ἐκείνῳ, νοῦς δ' ἀπ' ἐκείνου).[12]

The immediate conclusion we can draw from Proclus' interpretation of this oracular saying is that for him the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect belongs to the class of intelligible beings, because it is within this that Power performs its function of mediating between the intelligible[13] Father and the intelligible Intellect. Let us now assess whether in other parts of his works Proclus interprets this triad in the same way as in this passage, by starting with considering the Father first, then the other two members of the triad, namely Power and Intellect; after doing so, we will be able to assess whether or not Proclus' exegesis is in line with the original Chaldean doctrine, to the extent that this can be reconstructed from quotations and interpretations by other ancient authors, Damascius in particular.

1.1.1 The Father

To stay as close to the passage under examination as possible, attention will be given to those Proclean passages that describe the Father either in general terms or as a member of the first intelligible triad, without considering his identification with the divine Intellect, in turn identified with the Demiurge of the Platonic *Timaeus* and the Olympian god Zeus.[14] It must in fact be considered that although Proclus gives the title of 'Father' to entities placed at different levels of the hierarchy of Being, the general features of

the paternal nature remain the same, as proposition 151 of the *Elements of Theology*[15] explains:

> Prop. 151. What is paternal in the gods is primary and in all divine orders stands in the position of the Good. For by itself (and) by virtue of a single unspeakable superiority it creates the substantial existences of secondary beings, the entirety of their powers and their essences: this is why it is named 'paternal', because it exhibits the unified and boniform potency of the One and the cause which gives existence to secondary beings. In each order of the gods the paternal class leads the way, creating from itself and ordering all things, as being stationed in a position analogous to that of the Good. (Some) Fathers are more universal, others more particular (prop. 136), just as the very orders of the gods differ (in being some) more universal, others more particular in proportion to (their) causal (power); there are then as many different Fathers as all processions of the gods. For if in every order there is something analogous to the Good, the paternal must exist in all of them and each must proceed from the paternal unity.

In each divine rank in which the hierarchy of the gods is distributed, the being that plays the role of Father both 'stands in the position of the Good' (ἐν τἀγαθοῦ τάξει προϊστάμενον) and manifests the 'unified and boniform potency of the One' (τὴν ἡνωμένην καὶ ἀγαθοειδῆ τοῦ ἑνὸς δύναμιν ἐμφαῖνον). Proclus specifies that there are 'many different Fathers' who differ among themselves 'in degree of universality' and 'in proportion to (their) causal (power)', which means that more universal Fathers are cause of a bigger number of effects, less universal of fewer ones.[16] The Father being endowed with an higher degree of unity compared with the beings over which he holds sway, it is not surprising that the *Platonic Theology*[17] defines Him as 'equivalent to the monad and the cause of Limit among the gods' (ἀνάλογον γὰρ μονάδι μὲν καὶ τῇ τοῦ πέρατος αἰτίᾳ); Limit, together with Unlimitedness and Being (the latter having being originated from the other two) constitutes the first triad proceeded from the One.[18]

The fact that for Proclus there exist many 'Fathers' means that in his view the Father does not manifest Himself in the intelligible triad only, but also in the intelligible-intellective and intellective ones: Proclus says this explicitly in the *Platonic Theology*,[19] where he explains that in each of these three dimensions the first member of the triad always plays the role of Limit and Father, the second of Unlimitedness and Power, the third of Mixed and Intellect.

Now that the general meaning of the Proclean concept of divine fatherhood has been described, it remains to investigate what kind of specific relationship does exist between the Father and the intelligible dimension. In a passage from the third book of the *Platonic Theology*,[20] Proclus says that the paternal nature belongs primarily to the intelligible world and can be attributed to the One only analogically, that is, by attributing to it a category

that belongs primarily to beings that have proceeded from it (πατὴρ ἀπὸ τῶν προσεχῶς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ προελθόντων ἐπονομάζεται).[21] This is so because, being the first originator of the paternal nature (as well as of any nature), the One must possess it first in order to be able to give it to the beings that it generates.[22] But, properly speaking, it is necessary to deprive the One even of the conceptual category of fatherhood if its 'unspeakable and unknowable oneness' (τὴν ἄρρητον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄγνωστον ἕνωσιν) must be preserved.[23] Proclus says:

> In the Epistles[24] Plato calls the First God 'Father' and 'Lord'. But, given that the First transcends even the paternal order, the paternal nature belongs primarily to the intelligible gods. These are primarily cognate with the One and intelligibly reveal its unspeakable and unknowable oneness. If this is then called One and Father from those that have proceeded directly from it, the intelligible gods too, to the extent that they are primarily henads, are also primarily fathers.[25]

In another passage of the *Platonic Theology*,[26] Proclus reiterates the concept that the paternal nature exists primarily in the intelligible gods (τὸ μὲν πατρικὸν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ πρώτως ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ἐστι θεοῖς) and that Plato[27] calls the One–Good 'Father' by way of analogy only. He says the same in the *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*,[28] where he calls 'Father' the first member of the first intelligible triad. The title of Father is also given to other members of the intelligible hierarchy: the third member of the third intelligible triad (Plato's Living Being also identified with the Orphic Phanes) is not only called 'Father' but also 'Maker': this is the intelligible model contemplated by the Demiurge (called 'Maker and Father') when he creates the sensible dimension by availing himself of the help of the young gods of Plato's *Timaeus*,[29] whom Proclus simply calls 'Makers'.[30]

Proclus touches briefly on the position of the Father in the divine hierarchy in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* as well.[31] Here he criticizes those 'leading theologians'[32] (τινῶν ἐν θεολογίᾳ πρωτευσάντων) who make 'the primal god the summit of the intelligible world' (τοῦ νοητοῦ τὴν ἀκρότητα λέγειν τὸν θεὸν τὸν πρῶτον) and who regard the Father of the intelligible world (τὸν ἐκεῖ πατέρα) as cause of all things. He points out that he who is called 'intelligible Father' (νοητὸς γοῦν λέγεται πατὴρ) must not be identified with the One, since it is a mere 'participated henad' (οὗτος μὲν γὰρ ἑνάς ἐστι μεθεκτή). On the contrary, the Primal God celebrated by the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* (that is, the One) 'is not even a Father' (οὔτε πατὴρ) but 'superior . . . to all paternal divinity' (κρείττων καὶ πάσης τῆς πατρικῆς θεότητος). The intelligible Father brings to completion (συμπληροῖ) the triad that he forms together with Power and Intellect, while the One 'transcends all contrast and relationship with anything' (ἐξῄρηται πάσης πρὸς πάντα καὶ ἀντιδιαιρέσεως καὶ συντάξεως), so that in no respect can it be regarded as an intelligible Father (οὔτε πολλῷ πλέον νοητὸς πατήρ).[33] According to this important passage then,

the intelligible Father exists only as a *relative term* within the triad that He forms together with Power and Intellect, while the One, by virtue of its absolute nature – which makes it freed (*solutus*) from (*ab*) any relationship (Proclus uses the term ἄσχετον or 'unrelated') – [34] must necessarily transcend even the highest triad, in which, to use Thomas Aquinas' terminology, 'real relations'[35] exist.

The analysis of these Proclean passages has then confirmed our initial conclusion: according to Proclus, the Chaldean Father represents the summit (ἀκρότης) of the intelligible world and must not be identified with the One, which cannot be conceived of as relative term of any triadic relation. Proclus' conception of the Chaldean Father as it appears in his commentary on Plato's *First Alcibiades* (83, 17–20–84, 1–17) is then perfectly in line with what he says in other parts of his works. That said, the question remains whether Proclus' exegesis can be regarded as coherent with the Chaldean original doctrine or represents a deviation from it.

To answer this question, it is useful to compare Proclus' interpretation with that of other Neo-Platonic interpreters. We have already seen that in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Proclus criticises 'leading theologians' like Porphyry and Origen the Platonist for identifying the Father with the Platonic One–Good. Leaving out Origen the Platonist (who, as far as we know, did not undertake any exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles* and, for this reason, is not relevant to our investigation), let us focus instead on Porphyry, whom Suda's *Lexicon* credits with a work in four books on Julian the Chaldean (father of Julian the Theurgist, supposed author of the *Chaldean Oracles*) entitled *History of the Philosopher Julian the Chaldean*.[36] Unfortunately this book is lost, so that Porphyry's views on the *Chaldean Oracles* and their authors can only be accessed through the ancient authors who described them in their works. One is Proclus in the already mentioned passage from his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (where he is certainly referring to Porphyry [as shown by Dillon, who follows Hadot]),[37] the other Damascius who in his *On the Principles*[38] attributes to Porphyry the same doctrine as the one described by Proclus. Let us quote Damascius' passage in its entirety:

> After this, let us investigate whether there are two First Principles before the first intelligible triad, the one that is entirely ineffable and the (one which is) unrelated to this triad, as the great Iamblichus stated in the twenty-eighth book of his work, *The most perfect Chaldaic Theology*, or (whether), as the best of his successors established, the first intelligible triad is after the Ineffable and unique Cause or (whether) we should descend even lower than this hypothesis and say with Porphyry that the Father of the intelligible triad is the one Principle of all things? In what way the Oracles of the gods mean exactly that (which Porphyry says) will be decided in another occasion; now let us go after these things according to the more philosophical approach that we have chosen.

> Accordingly, how could then the unrelated, entirely ineffable and sole common Cause of everything be counted with the intelligibles and said (to be) Father of a triad? For this is already the summit of beings, while that has transcended the whole. And the paternal Intellect has specifically been suspended from the former (the intelligible dimension), while to the latter (the Cause of everything) nothing belongs. And the former is intelligible because of its own Intellect, while the latter (is) altogether ineffable. However, on the basis of what has been said to us (by Porphyry), one would either say that the Father of the triad (is) something more universal (than the other beings) or the One-All itself. But (the Father) is not even (an) adequate (subject) of this hypothesis, let alone of that (according to which He is what is more universal).
>
> Perhaps it is better to follow Iamblichus: if (we posit) the monad and the indefinite dyad, and the triad after these and this is the entire intelligible triad, as the Pythagoreans also say, the One would be before these, as those eminent philosophers maintain as well; or if there are Limit, Unlimitedness and the Mixed, the One is established by Plato before these (since) he also says that the One is the cause of mixing for the Mixed; or if there are Father, Power and Intellect, then what is prior to these would be the one Father before the triad. '**In every world there shines a triad over which a monad rules**,'[39] the Oracle says. If this (is the hierarchy present) in the worlds, how much more in the hyper-cosmic abyss, for it would be bad for that to begin from multiplicity. If then what is monadic is before the triadic, and what is completely ineffable is before that, as we said, it is clear what the the consequences are.

In this important passage, Damascius presents the views of his Neo-Platonic predecessors. He introduces Iamblichus' position first, saying that in the 28th book of his *The Most Perfect Chaldaic Theology* (τῆς χαλδαϊκῆς τελειοτατῆς θεολογίας) – a Iamblichean treatise which is unfortunately lost[40] – Iamblichus posited two principles (πρῶται ἀρχαὶ) before the intelligible triad: 'the unrelated to the (intelligible) triad' (ἡ ἀσύνταχτος πρὸς τὴν τριάδα), namely the One, and, above this, 'the one that is entirely ineffable' (ἥτε πάντη ἄρρητος), that is, a Principle which is even superior to the One and described as utterly ineffable.

Incidentally, we can point out that Damascius' report appears to be consistent with what can be drawn from Iamblichus' extant works. In his *On the Mysteries*,[41] Iamblichus, against Porphyry who identified the two, clearly posits the paternal monad below the One, describing this as unrelated to inferior beings (exactly as Damascius himself had said):

> There is one God prior to the true beings and to the universal principles, prior to the first God and king, remaining unmoved in the unity of its own oneness. For neither have the intelligible beings anything to do with it nor anything else. He is established as a paradigm for the

> self-engendered, self-producing and only-fathered God who is true Good; for it is something greater, and primary, and fount of all things, and foundation of what has been thought of, of those which are the first Ideas. From this One there has autonomously shone forth the self-sufficient God, for which reason He is termed 'Father of Himself' and 'Principle of Himself'; for He is First Principle and God of gods, a monad springing from the One, prior to Being and First Principle of essence. For from Him springs the quality of existence and essence, for which reason he is termed 'Father of essence'; He Himself is pre-essential being, the first principle of the intelligible realm, for which reason He is addressed as 'Principle of intelligibles'.

Although Iamblichus says his doctrine is based on Hermes Trismegistus[42] and not on the *Chaldean Oracles*, it must have certainly influenced Proclus' and Damascius' exegesis of the Chaldean Father.

Iamblichus contrasts a 'one God' (θεὸς εἷς), 'prior cause' (πρώτιστος), remaining in the unity of its own oneness (μονότητι τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἑνότητος μένων), 'model' (παράδειγμα) of all subsequent entities and the One (τὸ ἕν), 'with which no intelligible is linked' (οὔτε γὰρ νοητὸν αὐτῷ ἐπιπλέκεται), with 'the first God and king' (ὁ πρώτος θεὸς καὶ βασιλέυς), 'monad' (μονὰς) and truly Good (ὄντως ἀγαθὸς), a self-sufficient God (αὐτάρχης θεὸς) that, being 'Principle of Himself', can be called 'Father of Himself' (αὐτοπάτωρ) and whom, since by Him all beings have been generated, deserves the appellations of 'God of gods' (θεὸς θεῶν) and 'Father of essence' (οὐσιοπάτωρ). In the light of Damascius' report of Iamblichus' metaphysics quoted previously, we can assume with a high degree of certainty that the 'Father' mentioned in this passage from *On the Mysteries* coincides with the Chaldean one and that it is to Him that Iamblichus' description refers. But it does not seem that in the Iamblichean passage quoted here there is any mention of the ineffable principle superior to the One which Damascius says Iamblichus also posited. Being 'Father of essence' (οὐσιοπάτωρ), this Father also coincides with Proclus' One-Being (identification with which Proclus explicitly agrees);[43] this, generated from the interaction of Limit with Unlimitedness, produces all lower beings and is the summit of the first intelligible triad.

Secondly, Damascius presents the view of those for whom 'the first intelligible triad is after the Ineffable and unique Cause', pointing out that this is an opinion shared by the best of Iamblichus' successors, among whom there can certainly be found Syrianus and his disciple Proclus.

Thirdly, Damascius describes Porphyry's conception, saying that for him 'the Father of the intelligible triad' is the 'Principle of all things'. His reconstruction of Porphyrian metaphysics agrees with Proclus', who, as we have seen before, in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* criticizes Porphyry for making 'the primal god the summit of the intelligible world'. Damascius on his part rejects both the identification of the Father with the Ineffable Principle, since this is unknowable and beyond Being while the Father is

knowable and the summit of the intelligible dimension, and with the One (or One-All according to his terminology), since this transcends the intelligible dimension of which the Father is the summit.

As a consequence, the best choice for Damascius is either to follow Iamblichus and the Pythagoreans and say that the One precedes the monad, in turn identified with the Chaldean Father, or to follow Proclus, who posits the One before the triad of Limit, Unlimitedness and the Mixed/One-Being or, following the *Chaldean Oracles* themselves, to say that if there is the triad of Father, Power and Intellect (εἴτε πατήρ ἐστι καὶ δύναμις καὶ νοῦς), the principle which is before these (τὸ πρὸ τούτων) 'would be' (εἴη ἄν) 'the one Father before the triad' (ὁ εἷς πατὴρ ὁ πρὸ τῆς τριάδος), that is the paternal monad, as it is confirmed by fragment 27 des Places:[44]

> In every world there shines a triad over which a monad rules.

Of course, in Damascius' eyes, this paternal monad that governs the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect is inferior to the One and, to a greater degree, to the Ineffable Principle above it. Damascius poses three henads below the Ineffable Principle: the One-All, the Principle of Multiplicity or All-One, and the Unified (Proclus' One-Being), with which the Chaldean Father is made by him to coincide.[45,46] On the other hand, Damascius concedes that the triad One-All, All-One and Unified may analogically, not substantially, coincide with the Chaldean one Father – Power – Intellect.[47]

According to Damascius' report of the Chaldean doctrine on the Father (which is confirmed by fragment 27 des Places), this is then both the summit of the first intelligible triad (Father – Power – Intellect) and the supreme monad that rules this triad and makes it come into existence, or, in other words, the Father is the entire triad as this preexists in Him (ἢ ὁ Πατήρ ἐστι, δυνάμενός τε καὶ γεννῶν ἅπαντα μεθ᾽ ἑαυτόν, αὐτὴ ὅλη τρίας).[48,49] In *On the Principles*, Damascius also says that 'the God One', which should refer to the paternal monad, precedes the triad Father – Power – Intellect (Intellect is implied but not explicitly mentioned here because Damascius interprets Father and Power as the Proclean couple of primordial opposites 'Limit–Unlimitedness').[50] Finally, in another passage of the same work he comes to the point of interpreting the One itself as 'Father' of the triad (οὐκοῦν ἐν δίκῃ τὸ μὲν ἓν ὁ πατὴρ τριάδος), apparently identifying the One with the Chaldean Father.[51] This identification, however, is only apparent, because this 'One' is for him none other than the Unified, not the pure One or One-All, unless in this case he is expressing himself analogically, as it happens in the following passage, where he regards the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect as a symbol of the three primordial henads of his own system, namely the One-All, identified with the Father, the All-One, with Power and the Unified, with paternal Intellect:[52]

> The triad itself then is the One as Father, the Many as Power, the Unified as paternal Intellect.

Before drawing the conclusions, let us discuss another ancient source that refers explicitly to the Chaldean Father: *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*,[53] which Pierre Hadot attributed to Porphyry.[54] As it is well known, Hadot's thesis has not been accepted by all scholars.[55] Though this is a fundamental problem of academic research on Neo-Platonism, it is not crucial to our investigation, which will focus instead on the anonymous commentator's reconstruction of the Chaldean doctrine of the Father and compare it with what has been obtained so far over the course of the investigation. The passage that interests us is the following:

> . . . given that they do not exist, he generates them in himself. On the other hand, those who say that He himself is separated from all things that come from Him and who nonetheless allow that his Power and Intellect are co-unified in His simplicity together with another Intellect and who then do not separate Him from the triad, think it appropriate to deny that He (is a) number and, as a consequence, they refuse to admit that He is one.
>
> In some way these things are said correctly and truly, if, as those who transmit these things say, they have been revealed by the gods; but they transcend human comprehension and it would be as if one tried to explain to those who have been born blind the differences among colours, introducing logical symbols for those (colours) that escape any definition which could describe them: those who had listened would have true definitions of the colours, but they would not know what a colour is, since they would not have the natural perception of the colour.[56]

As it will have been clear to the attentive reader, this passage, whose beginning is unfortunately missing, does not mention the Father explicitly; but, since it mentions Power and Intellect and refers to a subject described with Greek masculine reflexive and personal pronouns (e.g. ἑαυτὸν, αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸν) that are usually used to designate the Father, we can say with confidence that it is to Him that the passage is referring.

The author has in mind thinkers who believe that the Father is 'separated from all things' (ἀρπάσαι ἑαυτὸν ἐκ πάντων) but who at the same time regard Power (δύναμις) and Intellect (νοῦς) as 'co-unified in His (*scil*. the Father's) simplicity' (ἐν τῇ ἁπλότητι αὐτοῦ συνηνῶσθαι); this means that Power and Intellect exist in the absolute unity of the Father before being manifested as hypostases separated from Him and constituting the first intelligible triad (Father [in his manifested aspect] – Power – Intellect). The author of the *Anonymous Commentary* makes also quick reference to 'another Intellect' (ἄλλον πάλιν (ν)οῦν) that could be identified with the Demiurgic Intellect[57] mentioned by some Chaldean fragments and which also preexists in the Father before being emanated from Him; he also points out that those who defend this position refuse to regard the Father as a number

and, as a consequence, to call Him 'one'. As it has already been pointed out by P. Hadot in his seminal study,[58] it is clearly to the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect that the anonymous author (or Porphyry if we accept Hadot's thesis) is referring.

Incidentally, it can be pointed out that Plotinus presents a doctrine[59] in certain respects similar to the one described here.[60] In explaining the procession of the Intellect from the One he says that, before proceeding from it, the Intellect in the One (ἐν ἑνὶ νοῦν) is not Intellect (οὐ νοῦν ὄντα) but One (ἓν γάρ); or, to express oneself in a different way, given the fact that the Intellect must preexist in the One to be emanated from it, when it is in the One the Intellect is not such but 'an Intellect contracted in unity'[61] (ἐν ἑνὶ νοῦν).[62]

Coming back to the *Anonymous Commentary*, its author points out that the doctrine he has expounded can be regarded as expressed 'correctly and truly'(ὀρθῶς τε καὶ ἀληθῶς) since it has been 'revealed by the gods' (εἴ γε θεοὶ . . . ταῦτα ἐξήγγειλαν); however, it cannot be understood by the human mind (φθάνει δὲ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην κατάληψιν).

What is important to us is the fact that the anonymous commentator describes the Chaldean Father as being both separated from the things He creates and containing in Himself, 'contracted in unity' – to borrow Plotinus' expression – the triad Father – Power – Intellect. This interpretation of the *Chaldean Oracles* is in line with the one proposed by Damascius, including the anonymous author's refusal to identify the Father with the One, even if the numerical context of this statement could indicate that it is the identification of Father with the number one, not with the One as metaphysical principle, as in the case of Damascius, that the anonymous author wants to deny.[63]

We are now able to answer the question from which this investigation has taken its beginning: is Proclus' interpretation of the Chaldean doctrine of the triad Father – Power – Intellect as it appears in his *Commentary on Plato's First Alcibiades* (83, 17–20–84, 1–17) correct or erroneous? It can be said that it is correct but partial, because it does not mention the fact that the Chaldean Father is not merely confined to the first intelligible triad but also transcends it, being the monad from which the triad has been originated, as fragment 27 coupled with Damascius' interpretation clearly shows. Damascius' exegesis coincides with that of the anonymous commentator of Plato's *Parmenides*, as R. Majercik also pointed out,[64] and we believe that their interpretations, as well as Porphyry's, are closer to the orginal Chaldean doctrine than the one Proclus proposes in his commentary on the *First Alcibiades* (83, 17–20–84, 1–17) as well as in the other Proclean passages quoted earlier.[65]

On the other hand, it must be said that Proclus does indeed know that the *Chaldean Oracles* regarded the Father as the summit of the intelligible triad Father – Power – Intellect. In another section of his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*[66] he quotes fragment 11 Des Places,[67] where an explicit mention of the 'paternal monad' is made (we will discuss it later):

> Thinking the Good itself where the paternal monad is.

This oracular saying clearly identifies the paternal monad with the platonic Good, which for Proclus in turn coincides with the One.[68] This fragment could be linked with another one, of which unfortunately the Greek text is not extant because it belongs to that part of Book VII of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* that has reached us in William of Moerbeke's Latin translation only.[69] The fragment is not part of des Places' collection, but it appears in Majercik's and is worth quoting it here:

> All things certainly come from the One and, conversely, go back to the One (and) are intellectually divided into a multiplicity of bodies.

If this fragment, of which a Greek retroversion has been attempted by W. Theiler,[70] is authentic – and nothing prevents us from not believing so, also considering that H. D. Saffrey defends this position with good arguments[71] – we will have further proof of the fact that the *Chaldean Oracles* believed in the existence of a transcendent First Principle that is even called 'One' here (interpreting this word, of course, not in the numerical sense mentioned by the anonymous commentator of Plato's *Parmenides* but in the metaphysical one). Given that, as fr. 11 des Places shows, the *Chaldean Oracles* identified the monad with the Father, we can assume either that they also identified the paternal monad with the One or that they believed it to be subordinate to the One, which would then be in line with Iamblichus' position as it is described in Damascius' report and in the passage from the *De Mysteriis* previously quoted. Regarding this specific problem, though, we can only make assumptions, lacking other authentic oracular fragments where the One is mentioned.

Proclus was in any case perfectly aware that the paternal monad was or could be the supreme principle of the Chaldean system. The reason why he did not point this out while commenting on fragment 4 des Places could be that such a clarification did probably not serve his purpose, which was to interpret the Platonic concept of Power as this was described by Plato in *First Alcibiades* 103 A Burnet. To do so, he quotes fragment 4 des Places, because it gives him the opportunity to explain that Power performs a mediating function at all levels of reality, not only the psychic/daemonic one but also the intellectual and intelligible, leaving out a detailed description of the function performed by the other two members of the triad between which Power mediates, namely Father and Intellect.

The modern interpreter of Proclus' work must always bear in mind that Proclus makes use of the *Chaldean Oracles* to elucidate very specific aspects either of his own doctrine or, as in this case, of Plato's, and that he does so without always taking pains to putting the oracular fragment quoted in context or to explaining every single aspect of it, focusing instead on what can be useful for him in each specific case.

It must also be pointed out that probably Proclus felt he had already explained Chaldean doctrine in detail in his treatise on *Chaldean Philosophy* (of which, unfortunately, only an epitome has been preserved by the Byzantine polymath Michael Psellus),[72] so that he did not feel the need to do the same in his Platonic Commentaries, or at least not in all.

1.1.1.1 The identification of Father with Hyparxis

In commenting on his interpretation of *First Alcibiades* 103 A Burnet, we have already seen how Proclus tends to stress the mediating function of the Father's Power. He does the same in the seventh Dissertation of his *Commentary on the Republic*,[73] where Power is compared to the irascible part of the human soul, since both perform a mediating role in their respective order, the irascible part of the soul between the rational and appetitive parts, Power between Hyparxis (ὑπάρχις)[74] and Intellect (νοῦς). Let us quote the entire passage in question:

> According as we have said, (the appetitive part of the soul) is third, just as the rational (part of the soul) is first since (it) grasps Intellect and the irascible (part is) in the middle (since it reaches) Power (in agreement with what the Oracles say): **because Power is in the middle between Intellect and Hyparxis**.[75]

In this passage, the term 'Hyparxis' replaces 'Father', as R. Majercik has shown.[76] This author points out[77] that P. Hadot, followed by H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westernik,[78] believed the replacement of the term 'Father' with 'Hyparxis' to have been introduced by the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*.[79]

If this is true, and Hadot's arguments are solid, here Proclus could in fact quote a passage from the *Chaldean Oracles* which escaped des Places' attention (the Greek text of the fragment would be the following: 'μέση γὰρ νοῦ καὶ ὑπάρξεως ἡ δύναμις'). We think that a proof of the Chaldean nature of this fragment can also be found in Majercik,[80] who quotes a passage from Damascius' *On the Principles* where he, in discussing the triad Hyparxis – Power – Intellect, replaces the Father with Hyparxis and attributes this replacement to some 'authors of sacred discourses' (ἱερολόγοι), which could be an allusion to the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*.[81] Majercik connects this passage from Damascius' *On the Principles* with fr. 4 des Places, because in both fragments Power is said to come from the first member of the triad (the Father in the case of fr. 4 des Places, Hyparxis here).[82] Although Majercik quotes[83] other two passages (one from Damascius' *On the Principles*[84] and the other from his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*[85]) where Damascius explicitly attributes the identification of the Father with Hyparxis to the *Chaldean Oracles*, she denies that they ever advanced such an identification but that this was Iamblichus's exegetical innovation. She

tries to prove this by undertaking a confutation of Westernik's and Combès' translation of a passage from *On the Principles*[86] where the two scholars refer the verbs ὀνομάζει ('he/she/it names') and παραδίδωσιν ('he/she/it hands down'), without subject in the Greek text, to the implied neutral subject τὰ Λόγια (the Oracles), which in turn refers to οἱ χρησμοί (the Oracles) of the preceding sentence.[87] Majercik points out that, being the two verbs in the singular, they should have been referred to a singular subject, not a plural one (τὰ Λόγια), that is, to Iamblichus, who is mentioned by Damascius at the end of the passage.[88] On the contrary, J. Combès[89] explains that without a neutral plural the sentence would be deprived of any sense. On our part, we believe that Combès' explanations are correct. Moreover, Iamblichus' supposed identification of the Father with Hyparxis must not necessarily have been an innovation of his but simply a principle already established by the *Chaldean Oracles* which both he and Damascius followed.

1.1.2 The Power

The investigation undertaken so far has hopefully clarified the Proclean interpretation of the Chaldean concept of Father, but it remains to discuss Proclus' exegesis of the other two members of the Chaldean triad, namely Power and Intellect. Here we will focus on Power as the Father's Potency only (considered in the active, not passive or potential, sense), that is, on Power's 'theological' function,[90] leaving out the concept of δύναμις as faculty of the soul, its relationship with Hecate (which will be discussed later) as well as its strictly logical and metaphysical aspects, which have been thoroughly studied by S. Gersh.[91]

The objective of this analysis is to assess whether Proclus' theological use of the concept of Power as it is used in *First Alcibiades* (83, 17–20–84, 1–17) and elsewhere is in line with its original meaning in the *Chaldean Oracles* (to the extent that it is possible to identify it with certainty) or represents a substantial deviation from it. The investigation will focus on Power as member of the Chaldean triad (the first intelligible triad of Proclus' system), but reference will be made to inferior manifestations of it whenever they could be used to clarify the concept of Power as this exists at the intelligible level.

By its mediating role,[92] Power not only connects the superior member of the triad with the inferior one but also gives the latter the 'Power' to perform its proper function.[93] In this respect, if Power does not need Intellect to exist and act, the opposite is not true.[94] Power is inferior to the Good/Being/Father because it receives its goodness from it, not from itself.[95] This is so because Power needs the principle of goodness not only to be good but also to exist, by virtue of the equivalence between being and goodness:[96] everything that exists is good (καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι πρὸ δυνάμεως ὂν ἀγαθόν).[97] Power is also considered by Proclus as a manifestation[98] of Unlimitedness at the intelligible level, in the same sense as Father represents Limit and Intellect, Being.[99] The triad Father – Power – Intellect belongs primarily

to the intelligible dimension (πάσης δὲ αὖ νοητῆς τριάδος τὸ μὲν πέρας ἐν ἑκάστῃ πατὴρ ἐπονομάζεται, τὸ δὲ ἄπειρον δύναμις, τὸ δὲ μικτὸν νοῦς),[100] but, at an inferior degree, to the intelligible – intellectual and intellectual ones as well. According to Proclus,[101] Plato himself referred to this triad as it exists at the intellectual level in the *Timaeus*, where he not only called the Demiurge/Intellect 'Father',[102] but also said that he creates by virtue of his own 'Power'.[103] Proclus regards the presentation of this concept as it has been made in the *Timaeus* as 'the most theological way of thinking about Power' (τὴν θεολογικωτάτην . . . ἔννοιαν περὶ τῆς δύναμεως), since Plato calls it 'Father's power' first (πρῶτον μὲν πατρὸς αὐτὴν ἀποκαλέσας δύναμιν) and only then attributes to it the creation of the universe.[104] The generative faculty of Power inevitably links it with the downward movement from oneness to multiplicity, of which Power is the actual initiator[105] (Proclus denominates it 'maker of multiplicity' [πλήθους ἐργάτις]),[106] even by virtue of it being an inferior manifestation of primal Unlimitedness;[107] in this regard, Proclus says: 'Since Power belongs indeed to the column of Unlimitedness, or rather it is a sort of Unlimitedness, (it is) cause for the universe of multiplicity and division'.[108] At the same time though, being a mediator, Power also reconnects multiplicity to oneness.[109]

The fact that Power mirrors Unlimitedness at an inferior level also implies that this concept assumes for Proclus a feminine connotation,[110] since Limit is associated with the masculine principle, Unlimitedness with the feminine one. Power must also be linked with Life (σύζυγος γὰρ ἡ ζωὴ τῇ δύναμει),[111] since both are expressions of the principle of Unlimitedness: Life at the level of movement, Power at that of the general creation of beings. But Proclus comes to the point of identifying Power with Unlimitedness, saying that this is nothing but the Limit's Power (τὸ δὲ ἄπειρον δύναμις ἀνέκλειπτος τοῦ θεοῦ τούτου).[112] It must be pointed out that here Unlimitedness is not participated Power but Power in itself (καθ' αὑτήν).[113] If the authentic oracular fragments that make clear reference to Power as Potency of the Father (that is, frg. 4, already examined and frgs. 5 and 96 des Places) are compared with the use Proclus makes of this concept, we can draw the conclusion that he is substantially faithful to the Chaldean meaning of it, excluding, of course, his identification of Power with Unlimitedness, which is alien to the Oracles' original doctrine. Fragment 5 says that Father did not allow its own Power to be enclosed in matter (οὐ γὰρ ἐς ὕλην πῦρ ἐπέκεινα τὸ πρῶτον ἐὴν δύναμιν κατακλείει), which reminds us the action that Power exerts on matter to foster the generation of beings. This is also mentioned by fragment 96, which subordinates the existence of Soul to the Father's Power (ὅττι ψυχή, πῦρ δυνάμει πατρὸς οὖσα φαεινόν). Of course, none of the oracular fragments that have come down to us possesses the level of philosophical analysis that can be found in Proclus' treatment of this concept. However, as we have hopefully shown, those philosophical superstructures that Proclus imposes on the original Chaldean idea of Power though (at least to a certain degree) alien to it do not distort its original meaning.[114]

1.1.3 The Intellect

We have seen earlier that for Proclus the Father is the summit of the intelligible dimension: he must therefore be identified with the first member of the first intelligible triad, while the Chaldean Power and Intellect coincide with the second and third respectively.

The same scheme reappears at the level of the second and third intelligible triads (πολλῷ ἄρα μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς πατήρ ἐστι καὶ δύναμις καὶ νοῦς).[115] It is on Intellect that the investigation must now focus, in order to assess to what extent Proclus' conception of it is in line with the Chaldean one.

Unfortunately, Proclus never focuses specifically on the Intellect of the first intelligible triad (with which the Chaldean Intellect coincides). He refers to it in passing in the third book of the *Platonic Theology*,[116] during the course of his discussion of the procession of the intelligible, intelligible-intellectual and intellectual triads from 'the very first triad, Limit, Unlimitedness and the Mixed' (ἡ πρωτίστη τρίας, πέρας, ἄπειρον, <μικτόν>),[117] the last member of which (the Mixed) coincides with both the One-Being[118] and the Chaldean Father (as we have already seen, Damascius too identifies the Father with the Unified, which is to a certain extent equivalent to Proclus' Mixed).[119] It must be pointed out that for Proclus the One is directly responsible for combining Limit with Unlimitedness to generate the Mixed/One-Being.[120] This contains the triad Being – Life – Intellect (corresponding to the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect) in each member of which the primordial triad Limit – Unlimitedness – Mixed manifests itself in its entirety, even if the 'dominant characteristic' (to use van Riel's expression)[121] of Being is Limit, of Life, Unlimitedness and of Intellect, the Mixed. In turn, Being is predominant (though the other two terms are present as well) in the three intelligible triads, Life in the three intelligible-intellectual ones and Intellect in the intellectual hebdomad (made-up of two triads and one monad).[122] But, in the end, all triads can be reduced to the primordial one.[123] In each triad the first member represents the principle of permanence in itself (μονή),[124] the second that of procession (πρόοδος) and the third that of conversion or return to the first (ἐπιστροφὴ).[125]

As said, the clearest mention of the first intelligible triad is made by Proclus in chapter 27 of book III of the *Platonic Theology*.[126] Here, taking Plato's *Timaeus*[127] and *Parmenides*[128] as points of reference, Proclus calls the 'first intelligible triad' (τὴν μὲν τοίνυν πρώτην τριάδα, κρύφιον καὶ νοητὴν) 'one' (ἕν) by virtue of the high degree of unity it has compared with the other triads and 'One-Being' (ἕν ὄν), in relation to its 'unitary and unspeakable Power' (τὴν δύναμιν ὡς ἑνοειδῶς καὶ [ἀπο]κρυφίως); he describes its members in the following way: the first as 'divine existence' (τὴν ὕπαρξιν τὴν θείαν), coinciding with Limit; the second as 'generative Power' (γεννετικὴν δύναμιν), identified with Unlimitedness, the third as 'essence' (οὐσίαν), representing the Mixed.

Coming specifically to the Intellect, Proclus points out that it is possible to categorize three different types of Intellects,[129] which differ in their

degree of intelligibility. The highest type is the 'Intellect of the Father', which coincides with the Intellect of the Chaldean triad: this is 'intelligible as essence and Intellect, but is not the Intellect of an essence, but rather the Intellect of the Father and of divinity'). The second is the 'Intellect of the essence', that is, the third member of the third intelligible triad, which is identical with Plato's Living Being since it contains in itself the 'most simple genres and the original models' of the cosmos: this is the 'intelligible Intellect' (νοητὸς γάρ ἐστι νοῦς) on the basis of which sensible reality has been created by the third type of Intellect, the Demiurge or 'intellective Intellect' (ὁ νοερὸς νοῦς), which contains intellectually what the preceding Intellect comprehends intelligibly.

Coming now to the Chaldean sources on the Intellect, fragment 5 des Places is of particular interest insofar as it considers two different Intellects: Intellect simply and the Craftsman of the fiery world; let us quote the fragment (preserved by Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, II. 57, 30–58, 3 Diehl):

> For the First transcendent Fire does not enclose its own Power in matter through works, but by availing (himself) of Intellect. For Intellect derived from Intellect is the Craftsman of the fiery world.[130]

We will analyze this fragment in detail in the next paragraph. What is important to stress now is the fact that the *Chaldean Oracles* posited two Intellects: the first is without doubt the Father's Intellect of fragment 4 des Places, the second is called 'the Craftsman of the fiery world',[131] that is, of the first of the three worlds (fiery, ethereal and material) in which the *Chaldean Oracles* divided the cosmos.

Another relevant testimony is fragment 7 des Places, which polemically points out that the Father left the government of created beings to the Second Intellect (πάντα γὰρ ἐξετέλεσσε πατὴρ καὶ νῷ παρέδωκε δευτέρῳ), which men erroneously mistake for the First, that is, the Father's Intellect.[132]

But given that the paternal Intellect was recognized as a specific hypostasis from the Oracles, which role did it have? Fragment 19 des Places gives us the answer to this question:

> The whole (divine) Intellect thinks this God.[133]

In this translation we have followed des Places that rightly interprets the Greek 'πᾶς' as 'the whole' ('tout'), against Majercik who translates 'every' and who also erroneously interprets the 'νοῦς' mentioned here as if it referred to 'every divine mind' and not to the Father's Intellect. We believe that she is also wrong in referring 'θεόν' to the Father's Intellect[134] and not, as des Places does, to the Father.[135] The fragment explains that the activity of the First Intellect consists in contemplating the Father, in whom all the ideas of the sensible world are present (see frgs. 37, 38, 53 des Places) and

which, as we have seen, the Father's Intellect communicates to the Second Intellect in order for it to create the sensible world.

Fragment 20 des Places also says:

> Since Intellect does not subsists independently from the intelligible and the intelligible does not subsist separately from Intellect.[136]

This Chaldean fragment (quoted by Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, III. 102, 10–11 Diehl) explains that in the intelligible world thinking subject and object thought coincide, a principle reiterated by Plotinus as well[137] and that Proclus refers with different degrees of perfection[138] to the intelligible, intelligible-intellectual and intellectual hypostases of his own system. In his commentary, des Places, following Lewy,[139] correctly refers the fragment to the 'divine Intellect',[140] while Majercik erroneously links it with the Second Intellect or Demiurge.[141] In response to her we can say that, though it is not wrong to think that in the Demiurge thinking subject and object thought coincide,[142] for Proclus the same can be said for levels of existence higher than the Demiurge, like the third member of the third intelligible triad, the so called Living Being of Plato's *Timaeus*.[143] The *Chaldean Oracles* reassert the connection between the intelligible dimension (represented by the Platonic Ideas) and the Father's Intellect in fragments 36, 37 and 108 as well.

The conclusion we can draw from this comparison is that Proclus' interpretation of the Father's Intellect is generally in harmony with the *Chaldean Oracles*' teachings on this topic. In particular, the idea according to which the Father's Intellect coincides with the intelligible dimension and transcends the Second Intellect, directly responsible for the creation of the sensible world, is clearly present in Proclus' philosophical system, where the intelligible Intellect, third member of the first intelligible triad and comparable with the Chaldean paternal Intellect, is superior to the Demiurgic Intellect located in the intellectual triad, which corresponds to the Chaldean Second Intellect. Although the *Chaldean Oracles* neither reach the degree of philosophical precision achieved by Proclus, nor divide the divine world into intelligible, intelligible-intellectual and intellectual triads – confining themselves (at least in the extant fragments) to separating the Father's Intellect from the Second Demiurgic Intellect – it cannot be denied that they left a profound trace on Proclus' doctrine of the intelligibles, as the investigation conducted so far has hopefully demonstrated.[144]

1.2 The First Transcendent Fire, the First Intellect and the Demiurgic Intellect

Fragment 5 des Places = pag. 13 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 57, 24–58, 2 Diehl)

> But why, one could ask, does Plato establish the universe beginning from the fixed stars? It is because it belongs to the physicist to discuss visible

> or entirely sensible things. But perhaps he reasonably mentioned these things because (they belong to) God's creation. For of those things, one is life-giving, the other paternal, while the material world is Demiurgic. As the Oracles say: **For the First Transcendent Fire does not enclose its own Power in matter through works, but by availing (Himself) of Intellect. For Intellect derived from Intellect is the Craftsman of the fiery world.**

Proclus quotes fragment 5 des Places in the context of his explanation of Plato's *Timaeus* 32 C 5–8 Burnet, where the Athenian philosopher in describing the concept of wholeness, the 'third gift'[145] of the Demiurge to the universe, says that the Demiurge built the cosmos from the entirety of each of the four elements, 'leaving out no part or power of each of them'. Proclus had previously explained that for Plato there exist different degrees of perfection in each element[146] and that the four elements are distributed in all of the three regions in which the cosmos is divided, namely the heavens, the sublunar region and the earth governed by the hyper-cosmic gods Zeus Second (Zeus First is Plato's Demiurge), Poseidon and Pluto respectively.[147] Even after they become constitutive part of the cosmos, the elements preserve their own powers, such as movement, sharpness, tenuousness etc.[148] A little before the passage we are currently commenting, Proclus had stressed[149] that Plato's conception of the four elements is in harmony with 'foreign theology' (ὑπερορία θεοσοφία), that is, with the *Chaldean Oracles*,[150] which divided the cosmos into empyrean, ethereal and material regions. Now he asks himself why the Demiurge started his creation from the fixed stars.[151] Proclus answers this question by pointing out that, the *Timaeus* being a dialogue concerning physics, it must deal with visible things first.

Here Proclus confines himself to using fragment 5 des Places to point out that, like Plato, the *Chaldean Oracles* assign the material world to the Demiurge, from whom they in addition distinguish both the Father, also called First Transcendent Fire, and the Father's Intellect. Apart from this, there is no real exegesis of the fragment here. However, it is worth analyzing it in detail, because it sheds light on the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect that we have discussed before as well as on Chaldean metaphysics in general.

1.2.1 The First Transcendent Fire

The expression ὁ πῦρ ἐπέκεινα τὸ πρῶτον of fragment 5 is connected by des Places[152] with the 'ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα' of fr. 169, since in both the First Principle (τὸ πρῶτον) is defined by the adverb 'ἐπέκεινα' or 'beyond'. We will discuss the concept of ἐπέκεινα in detail when we will comment on fragment 169 des Places. Now we will confine ourselves to saying that this word expresses the supreme transcendence of the First Principle, which is stressed by fragment 5 itself when it says that the First Transcendent Fire did not allow its own Power to operate directly on matter, but it did so through the Demiurgic

Intellect, which is here called Craftsman (τεχνίτης) of the 'fiery cosmos' (ὁ κόσμος πυρίος).[153] This coincides with the intellectual dimension which, as des Places points out,[154] must not be regarded as identical with the intelligible Ideas present in the Father's Intellect according to frg. 37 des Places.

It is possible that what we are dealing with here is a new formulation of the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect, in which Father is identified with the First Transcendent Fire, while the Demiurgic Intellect is placed outside the triad. Let us now focus on the fiery nature that fragment 5 des Places attributes to the Father. In Greek philosophy, the idea that the First Principle is fire was first introduced by Heraclitus[155] and then developed by the Stoics during the Hellenistic age.[156] If ancient sources generally agree on considering fire as the First Principle of the Stoic system, they do not offer a coherent account of what this fire is: is it material or immaterial? And, if it is material, is it made up of physical matter or of intelligible one, as in Plotinus' philosophy?[157] The comparison with Plotinus is not casual since in fr. 443 von Arnim he[158] points out that even the Stoics recognize that there is 'something whose nature is superior to body' (τι πρὸ τῶν σωμάτων εἶναι κρεῖττον), such as Soul, the 'intelligent *pneuma*' (ἔννουν τὸ πνεῦμα) and 'intellectual fire' (πῦρ νοερὸν). Other ancient authors as well attribute the concept of intellectual fire to the Stoics,[159] so that it cannot be ruled out that for them Intellect constituted a sort of intellectual substance, whose power became more and more material in proportion to its removal from its divine source. This reconstruction can also be based on fr. I. 158 von Arnim, a testimony from Themistius,[160] where this philosopher says that for Zeno, God manifests Himself 'on the one hand as Intellect, on the other hand as Soul, then as Nature and, in the end, as a certain condition' (ποῦ μὲν εἶναι νοῦν, ποῦ δὲ ψυχήν, ποῦ δὲ φύσιν, ποῦ δὲ ἕξιν). It is not possible to carry out here a detailed analysis of all the Stoic fragments that deal with the nature of the divine in general and of divine fire in particular. We can however take into consideration some fragments to give the reader a general idea of the degree of complexity and importance of this fascinating topic.

Fr. I. 98 von Arnim, a testimony from Aristocles in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel*,[161] reports that the Stoics, 'like Heraclitus' (καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτος), believed that 'fire is the fundamental element of things that are' (στοιχεῖον εἶναί φασι τῶν ὄντων τὸ πῦρ) and that, 'like Plato' (ὡς Πλάτων), its constitutive principles are 'God and matter' (τούτου δ' ἀρχὰς ὕλην καὶ θεόν). This important passage could be subject to alternative interpretations since one could ask whether 'element' (στοιχεῖον) means a principle from which everything derives – as in fr. I. 126 von Arnim, a testimony from Varro (*sive, ut Zenon Citieus, animalium semen ignis is, qui anima ac mens*)[162] – or simply one of the four material elements of Greek physics. This alternative is in turn based on supposed Stoic doctrine since, according to Stobaeus (= fr. I. 413 von Arnim),[163] Chrysippus interpreted the element fire in a triple sense: as principle of everything, including the other elements (ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὰ λοιπὰ συνίστασθαι κατὰ μεταβολὴν καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ λαμβάνειν τὴν ἀνάλυσιν); as one

of the four elements;[164] as that in which reality dissolves and from which it is again generated. To further complicate the situation, some ancient testimonies explicitly stress that for the Stoics, fire had an intellectual nature, making it quite difficult for a modern interpreter to understand how one of the four material elements could at the same time be endowed with an intellectual essence. Concerning this last aspect, we can also mention fragment I. 157 von Arnim, a testimony from Aetius,[165] according to whom Zeno believed that God is 'the Intellect of the cosmos made-up of fiery substance' (νοῦν κόσμου πύρινον). Augustine (= fr. I. 146 von Arnim) confirms this by saying that Zeno the Stoic 'believed that even God himself was fire' (*nam et deum ipsum ignem putabat [Zeno]*).[166]

In his *City of God*,[167] he also reports that for the Stoics fire – understood as a body and one of the four elements (*id est corpus, unum ex his quatuor elementis*) but also endowed with life and wisdom (*et viventem et sapientem*) – must be conceived of as the Creator of the world and of what is in it (*ipsius mundi fabricatorem atque omnium, quae in eo sunt*) and identified with God (*eumque omnino ignem deum esse putaverunt*).

Fr. 5 des Places, being probably aware of the possible misunderstandings that the designation of the First Principle as fire could entail, on the one hand makes this word be preceded by the adverb 'beyond' (ἐπέκεινα) (which stresses the transcendental nature of the First Principle's fire), and, on the other hand, points out that the Transcendental Fire did not operate directly on matter, which thing would have diminished its transcendence, but by availing itself of the Demiurgic Intellect. Fragment 3 des Places, where it is said that the Father did not include its own fire in its intellectual Power (ὁ Πατὴρ ἥρπασσεν ἑαυτόν, οὐδ' ἐν ἐῇ δυνάμει νοερᾷ κλείσας ἴδιον πῦρ) can be a further confirmation that the fire we are dealing with here is not the visible one. We can then safely assume that the Heraclitean-Stoic tradition exerted some influence on the Chaldean conception of the First Principle as transcendental fire. But the Greek oracular tradition must also be considered.

For example, the inscription found in the walls of the ancient city of Oenoanda located in the upper valley of the River Zanthus in Lycia and dated from the end of the II to the first half of the III century says that God 'lives in fire' (ἐν πυρὶ ναίων), using concepts reminiscent of the Stoic ones that we have analyzed before.[168,169]

Finally, the so called *Tübingen Theosophy*[170] could also be considered. This is an anonymous treatise written around 500 A.D. but which has come to us through an eighth-century epitome, as an appendix (with the title *Theosophy*) to the lost treatise *On True Belief*.[171] It includes a collection of oracles of pagan gods as well as testimonies of sages and sibyls on the Christian Trinity and Christ's Incarnation. A detailed comparison of the *Tübingen Theosophy* with the *Chaldean Oracles* exceeds the scope of this book. However, we will focus on those passages where the concept of God as fire appears more clearly. In the oracular response given by Apollo to a certain Theophilus, who asked whether or not he was a god, Apollo answered that

'god is a very high fire' (ἀλλὰ πέλει πυρσοῖο θεὸς), 'an immense flame, set in motion by itself, boundless eternity, inexplicable to the Blessed themselves if the Great Father did not want to' (φλογμὸς ἀπειρέσιος, κινούμενος, ἄπλετος αἰών· ἔστι δ' ἐνὶ μακάρεσσιν ἀμήχανος, εἰ μὴ ἑαυτὸν βουλὰς βουλεύσῃσι πατὴρ μέγας) and located 'above the celestial vault, in the highest place never reached' (ὑπερουρανίου κύτεος καθύπερθε λελογχώς).[172] Though he identifies God with fire, Apollo points out that it is not the visible fire he is referring to (οὐ γὰρ ἔχει δαίην), since divine fire is 'self-generated' (αὐτοφυής), 'inexpressible' (ἀδίδακτος), 'without mother' (ἀμήτωρ), 'unshakable' (ἀστυφέλικτος), 'inexpressible' (οὔνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ χωρούμενος), 'residing in fire' (ἐν πυρὶ ναίων) (this last expression being identical to the one used in the Oenoanda inscription, a sign of the possible Clarian provenance of this oracle).[173]

We can see how the Clarian Apollo's description of the supreme God is perfectly compatible with that of fragment 5 des Places: above the gods there is a Supreme Principle, identified with the Father, of a fiery nature, which is the originator of the sensible world that it however transcends and whose nature cannot be described with human words and concepts.

Having exhausted the topic of the Supreme Principle as transcendental fire, let us now focus on the two Intellects mentioned by fr. 5 des Places.

1.2.2 The Intellect and the Demiurgic Intellect: Numenius of Apamea and the Chaldean Oracles

In comparison with fr. 4, fragment 5 des Places introduces the Demiurgic Intellect (ὁ νόος τεχνίτης) and gives Him the role of creator of the 'fiery world' (κόσμου πυρίου).[174] This coincides with the intellectual model of the sensible world, which, as fr. 37 des Places explains, is made-up of 'multiform ideas' (παμμόρφους ἰδέας) 'thought of' by the Father's Intellect (νοήσας ἀκμάδι βουλῇ)[175] and separated from one another by the Demiurgic Intellect's intellectual fire (ἀλλ' ἐμερίσθησαν νοερῷ πυρὶ), so that the ideas present in the Father's Intellect may become intellectual model (νοερὸν τύπον) of the sensible world (this would have been impossible if they had remained in the concentrated or unified condition they had in the Father's Intellect). Here the reader must take care not to confuse the ideas as they are present in the Father's Intellect (where they are not different from the Intellect itself by virtue of the coincidence of thinking subject and object thought that characterizes it) with the ideas that the Demiurgic Intellect makes use of to give matter a shape and which can be regarded as the inferior manifestation of the ideas existing in the Father's Intellect.

The introduction of a second Intellect in addition to that of the Father invites us to discuss the connection established by some modern interpreters between the *Chaldean Oracles* and the Middle-Platonic philosopher Numenius of Apamea.[176] Given the fragmentary nature in which his treatise *On the Good* has reached us,[177] it is difficult to reconstruct Numenius' views with precision. He separates an absolutely transcendent First God from a

Second god, whose single nature is split in two because of its involvement with dyadic matter: one aspect of it is turned towards the First God, the other towards the sensible dimension.[178] The First God is called 'Father' of the Second god, who is identified with the Platonic Demiurge.[179] According to Numenius, the First God 'is involved with the intelligible dimension only' (ὁ μὲν οὖν πρῶτος περὶ τὰ νοητά), while the Second with both the intelligible and the sensible (ὁ δὲ δεύτερος περὶ τὰ νοητὰ καὶ αἰσθητά).[180] The First God is also identified with both Being and Plato's Good[181] and described as a First Intellect that the Second god contemplates to accomplish the creation of the material world.[182] Finally, according to Proclus, Numenius identifies the First God with the Platonic Living Being, the Second with the Demiurgic Intellect,[183] and also considers the cosmos as a sort of 'third God'.[184]

It is certainly possible that Numenius' views came from a linguistic, cultural and religious milieu similar to that in which the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles* lived, as it has been pointed out by P. Athanassiadi[185] (though her explanations about the contacts between the two seem too speculative).[186] Before her, a comparison between Chaldean and Numenian fragments had already been attempted by A.-J. Festugière[187] and E. R. Dodds, who, after listing all possible points of contact between the two,[188] confessed that it is difficult to explain how their relationship developed.[189] It is also important to stress what differentiates Numenius from his Chaldean counterparts. One of the most relevant differences consists in the fact that the Oracles refer to a paternal monad that transcends both the Father's Intellect and the Demiurgic one, while Numenius seems to confine himself to positing two Intellects, one superior, the other inferior. Fr. 19 des Places further complicates the matter, since in it Numenius identifies the First Intellect (previously identified with the Platonic Good), with the One (τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἕν).[190] Unfortunately, the fragment does not say more about the apparent equation First God = First Intellect = the Good = the One. Therefore, things being as they are, any conclusion on the relationship between the *Chaldean Oracles* and Numenius must inevitably remain hypothetical.

Notes

1 *Oracula chaldaica*, É. des Places ed. and trans., 3rd ed. (Paris, 2010).
2 *De oraculis chaldaicis*, W. Kroll ed. (Breslau, 1894; repr. Hildesheim, 1962).
3 *Platonis Opera*, J. Burnet ed., vol. 5 (Oxford, 1907; repr. 1967), 103.
4 Proclus, *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, L. G. Westernik ed. – W. O' Neill trans. and comm. (Westbury, Wiltshire, 2011), 68, 4–9. On the fact that daemons must not be identified with the souls of men, see ibid., 70, 3–4. In criticizing Plotinus' view (see Plotinus, *Ennead III. 1–9* – with an English translation by A. E. Armstrong [Cambridge, MA–London, 1990], III. 4 [15], 3, 6) according to which 'the daemon is the rational faculty' (ὁ δαίμων τὸ λογικόν), Proclus stresses the superiority of daemonic souls to human ones; see id. in ibid., 75, 16–20–76, 1–3.
5 The literature concerning Proclus' exegetical method, as it was applied to Plato's Dialogues, the Homeric poems, the Chaldean Oracles and the Orphic texts, has grown over the years, and we will come back to it during the course of this

dissertation; at the moment, we will confine ourselves to listing just some of the most relevant publications on this topic: P. Athanassiadi, *Le traitement du mythe: de l'empereur Julien à Proclus*, in M. A. Amir-Moezzi–J.-D. Dubois–C. Jullien–F. Jullien eds., *Pensée grecque et sagesse d'Orient–Hommage à Michel Tardieu* (Tunhout, 2009), 63–76. Id., *The Chaldean Oracles: Theology and Theurgy*, in P. Athanassiadi–M. Frede eds., *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1999), 149–183. L. Brisson, *The Neoplatonic School of Athens*, in id., *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretations and Classical Mythology*, C. Tihany trans. (Chicago–London, 2004), 87–106. Id., *La commentaire comme priére destinée a assurer la salut de l'ame*–La place et la rôle des Oracles Chaldaïques dan le commentaire sur le Timée de Platon par Proclus in M. O. Goulet-Cazé ed., *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation,* Actes du Colloque International de l'Institute des Traditions textuelles (Paris et Villejuif, 22–25 septembre 1999) (Paris, 2000), 329–353. Id. *La place des Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Théologie Platonicienne*, in A. Ph. Segonds–C. Steel eds. with the assistance of C. Luna and A. F. Mettraux, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne*–Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13–16 mai 1998) en l'honneur de H. D. Saffrey et L. G. Westernik (Leuven-Paris, 2000), 109–162. Id., *Plato's Timaeus and the Chaldean Oracles*, in G. J. Reydams-Schils ed., *Plato's Timaeus as Cultural Icon* (Notre Dame, IN, 2003), 111–132. Id., *Allegory as used by the later Neo-Platonic Philosophers*, in K. Corrigan–J. D. Turner–P. Wakefield eds., *Religion and Philosophy in the Platonic and Neo-Platonic Traditions* (Sankt Augustin, 2012), 121–130. Id., *Proclus' Theology*, in P. d'Hoine–M. Martin eds., *All from One: A Guide to Proclus* (Oxford, 2017), 207–222. Id., *Proclus et l'orphisme*, in J. Pépin–H.-D. Saffrey, *Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens*–Actes du Colloque international du CNRS – Paris, 2–4 octobre 1985 (Paris, 1987), 58–118. J. J. Cleary, *Proclus as a Reader of Plato's Timaeus*, in J. Dillon–B. O' Byrne–F. O'Rourke eds., *Studies on Plato, Aristotle and Proclus: Collected Essays on Ancient Philosophy of John J. Cleary* (Leiden–Boston, 2013), 525–541. R. Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2012), 185–200. S. K. Strange, *Proclus and the Ancients*, in K. Corrigan–J. D. Turner eds., *Platonisms: Ancient, Modern and Postmodern* (Leiden–Boston, 2007), 97–108. J. A. Coulter, *The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpreations of the Later Neoplatonists* (Leiden, 1976). J. Dillon, *Image Symbol and Analogy: Three Basic Concepts of Neoplatonic Allegorical Exegesis*, in B. Harris ed., *The Significance of Neoplatonism* (New York, 1976), 247–262. Id., *Philosophy and Theology in Proclus-Some Remarks on the "Philosophical" and "Theological" Modes of Exegesis in Proclus' Platonic Commentaries*, in id., *The Great Tradition: Further Studies in the Development of Platonism and Early Christianity* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain–Brookfield, Vermont, USA, 1997), XIX, 66–76. A.-J. Festugière, Modes de composition des commentaries de Proclus: *Musem Helveticum: schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumwissenschaft* 2 (20) (1963) 77–100. S. Gersh, *Proclus' Theological Methods: The Program of Theol. Plat. I. 4*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 15–27. P. Hoffmann, *What Was Commentary in Late Antiquity? The Example of the Neoplatonic Commentators*, in M. L. Gill–P. Pellegrin, *A Companion to ancient Philosophy* (Malden, MA, USA–Oxford, UK–Victoria, Australia, 2006), 597–622. O. Kuisma, *Proclus' Defence of Homer* (Helsinki, 1996). A. Lernould, *Damascius, Olympiodore et Proclus sur les attributs «divin» (θεῖον) et «intelligible»*, in S. Delcomminette–P. d'Hoine–M.-A. Gavray, *Ancient Readings of Plato's Phaedo* (Leiden–Boston, 2015), 212–239. R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian–Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1989), 162–232. Id., *Introduction* to id., *Proclus the Successor on Poetics*

and the Homeric Poems: Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on the Republic of Plato-Translated with an Introduction and Notes (Atlanta, 2012), XI–XLII. Id., *The Neoplatonists and their Books*, in M. Finkelberg–G. G. Stroumsa eds., *Homer, the Bible and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (Leiden–Boston, 2003), 195–211. D. G. MacIsaac, *Proclus: Philosophy as the Exegesis of 'Sacred' Texts*, in T. Kirby–R. Acar–Bilal Baş, *Philosophy and the Abrahamic Religions: Scriptural Hermeneutics and Epistemology* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2013), 95–134. S. Rappe, *Language and Theurgy in Proclus' Platonic Philosophy*, in id., *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius* (Cambridge, 2000), 167–196. G. Shaw, *The Neoplatonic Transmission of Ancient Wisdom*, in N. P. des Rosiers–L. C. Vuong eds., *Religious Competition in the Greco-Roman World* (Atlanta, 2016), 107–118. A. Sheppard, *Studies on the 5th and 6th Essays of Proclus' Commentaries on the Republic* (Göttingen, 1980). Id., *Proclus as Exegete*, in S. Gersh ed., *Interpreting Proclus: From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2014), 57–79. Id., *Plato's Phaedrus in the Theologia Platonica*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 415–423. E. Lamberz, *Proklos und die Form des philosophichen Kommentars*, in Pépin–Saffrey, *Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens* (1987), 29–38.; A. Sheppard, *Proclus' Philosophical Method of Exegesis: The Use of Aristotle and the Stoics in the Commentary on the Cratylus*, in Pépin–Saffrey, *Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens* (1987), 145–154. P. T. Struck, *Moonstone and Men That Glow: Proclus and the Talismanic Signifier*, in id., *Birth of the Symbol-Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts* (Princeton, 2004), 227–253. H. Tarrant, 'Must Commentators Know Their Sources? Proclus' "In Timaeum" and Numenius': *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 47 (1) (2004) 175–190. R. M. van den Berg, *The Homeric Hymns in Late Antiquity: Proclus and the Hymn to Ares*, in A. Faulkner–A. Vergados–A. Schwab, *The Reception of the Homeric Hymns* (Oxford, 2016), 203–219.; Id., *Platons Kratylos und die Theologia Platonica des Proklos*, in M. Perkams–R.-M. Piccione eds., *Proklos–Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik*–Akten der Konferenz in Jena am 18.–20. September 2003 (Leiden–Boston, 2006), 35–48.; Id., *Proclus' Commentary of the Cratylus in Context: Ancient Theories of Language and Naming* (Leiden–Boston, 2008). Id., Proclus on Hesiod: *The Classical Quarterly* 1 (64) (2014) 383–397. Id., Proclus and the Myth of the Charioteer: *Syllecta Classica* 8 (1997) 149–162. Id., Part One–Essays in id., *Proclus' Hymns: Essays, Translations, Commentary* (Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2001), 3–142. T. Whittaker, *The Commentaries of Proclus*, in id., *The Neo-Platonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism* (Cambridge, 1918), 231–314.

6 Iamblichus, *Iamblichi Calcidiensis–In platonis dialogos commentariorum fragmenta*, J. Dillon ed. and trans. (Leiden, 1973), *In Alcibiadem*, fr. 4, 74.

7 According to Dillon (ibid., 233) 'the intellect of the Soul' (τὸν τῆς ψυκῆς νοῦν) refers to 'that part of the soul which is *as it were* its mind, that is, its highest part, which could also be termed its "eye", by which it perceives the highest level of truth.' On this important concept of Proclus' philosophy see the excellent paper by D. G. MacIsaac, The *Nous* of the partial Soul in Proclus' Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato: *Dionysius* (29) (2011) 29–60.

8 Dillon (ibid., 232–233) explains that the distinction between οὐσίαι (ὑπάρξεις), δυνάμεις and ἐνέργειαι is applied by Iamblichus to daemons, to the Soul as a whole as well as to all superior beings generally considered. See also Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, É. des Places ed. and trans. (Paris, 1966), II, 1, 1–5.

9 On this, see C. Militello, Antecedenti porfiriani della triade ΟΥΣΙΑ – ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ – ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑ: *Annali della facoltà di Scienze della Formazione–Università degli Studi di Catania* (9) (2010) 171–182.

10 Proclus, *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, 69, 8–12; 72, 18–19 Westernik.

11 The same triad – used to describe the nature of fire, which can be divided into its essence, power and energies – can be found in Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, E. Diehl ed., 3 vols. (1903–1904–1906, repr. Amsterdam, 1965), II. 125, 13–15; in ibid., 258, 3–4, it is used to describe the nature of the Soul. One of the most detailed explanations of the relationship between 'power' and 'activity' in Proclus' metaphysics can be found in S. Gersh, *ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΣ: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden, 1973), especially 94–102. Concerning the presence of this triad in the Soul, see also C. Helmig, *Iamblichus, Proclus and Philoponus on Parts, Capacities and Ousiai of the Soul and the Notion of Life*, in K. Corcilius–D. Perler eds., *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz* (Berlin-Boston, 2014), 161–164 (where there can be found a discussion of this Proclean passage interpreted in the broader context of Neo-Platonic psychology).

12 *Oracula Chaldaica*, fr. 4 des Places. In his *Commentary on the Parmenides*, Proclus interprets the three protagonists of this Dialogue (Parmenides, Zeno and Socrates) as images of respectively Father, Power and Intellect: Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, in *Procli philosophi platonici opera inedita*, V. Cousin ed., pt. 3 (Hildesheim, 1864; repr. 1961), 1021, 31–38. The same oracle is quoted in Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, H. D. Saffrey–L. G. Westernik eds., vols. 1–6 (Paris, 1968–1974–1978–1981–1987–1997), VI. 8, 42, 10. Proclus also paraphrases this oracular fragment in *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, 161, 1–3 Westernik as well as in Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 389, 26–27 Diehl.

13 Regarding the concept of 'intelligible' or νοητόν in Proclus' philosophy (with a comparison with Olympiodorus's and Damascius' doctrines), see A. Lernould, *Damascius, Olympiodore et Proclus sur les attributs <<divin>> (θεῖον) et <<intelligible>*, in Delcomminette–d'Hoine–Gavray, *Ancient Readings of Plato's Phaedo* (Leiden–Boston, 2015), 212–224.

14 With regard to Proclus' conception of the Demiurge as Creator of the sensible world see Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 299, 13–319, 1–21, 333, 20–25 (where the Demiurge is called 'Father'); 381, 26–416, 5; II. 242, 1–3 (where Proclus defines the intellectual Father as 'monad of the intellectual gods'); III, 185; III, 202 Diehl. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 22, 76, 3–13; V. 16, 52, 9–25–53, 1–15 (on the Demiurge as 'Creator and Father'); V. 16, 57, 1–25–58, 10–25; V. 21, 77, 10–25–78, 1–25 (on the identification of Plato's Demiurge with the Olympian Zeus); V. 25, 96, 11–25; V. 28, 104, 1–25 (on the difficulty to understand the nature of the Demiurge); V. 37, 135, 10–25; VI, 15, 75, 10–25–76, 1–15 Saffrey–Westernik. Proclus, *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, 310, 12–15–311, 1–12 Westernik. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 1096, 30–32 Cousin (where Proclus criticizes those who identify the First God [that is, the One] with the Demiurge. According to Dillon, Proclus is probably attacking Origen the Platonist's views [see Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, G. R. Morrow–J. M. Dillon trans., with Introduction and Notes by J. M. Dillon (Princeton, 1987), 443, n. 77]). Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, G. Pasquali ed. (Leipzig, 1908), 8, 48, 1–25. See also J. Opsomer, *Proclus on Demiurgy and Procession: A Neoplatonic Reading of the Timaeus*, in M. R. Wright ed., *Reason and Necessity: Essays on Plato's Timaeus* (London, 2000), 113–143; E. Kutash, *Ten Gifts of the Demiurge: Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (London, 2011); J. Dillon, *The Role of the Demiurge in the Platonic Theology*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie platonicienne* (2000), 339–349; L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (Edinburgh, 1996), 151–154.

15 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary by E. R. Dodds, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963), 151, 133–135.
16 Id., *Elementa theologica*, 60; 62 Dodds. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 752, 1–2 Cousin. With regard to the Fathers and their different roles in the creation of the cosmos, see G. van Riel, *Proclus on Matter and Physical Necessity*, in R. Chiaradonna–F. Trabattoni, *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop–Il Ciocco, Castelvecchio Pascoli, June 22–24, 2006 (Leiden–Boston, 2009), 247–254.
17 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, I. 28, 122, 10 Saffrey–Westernik.
18 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 89–90, 159 Dodds. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 8, 31, 18–32, 28; III. 21, 73, 15–20 Saffrey–Westernik. See also R. Chlup, *Proclus* (2012), 76–82. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (1996), 109–110, 175–179, 181. W. Beierwaltes, *Proclo–I fondamenti della sua metafisica*–Introduzione di Giovanni reale, traduzione di Nicoletta Scotti (Milan, 1990), 97–107 (original title: *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik* [Frankfurt a. M., 1965]). G. van Riel, *The One, the Henads and the Principles*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 82–86; M. Martijn–L. P. Gerson, *Proclus' System* in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 55–57. A. C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism* (Oxford, 1990), 166–169. D. G. MacIsaac, *The Origin of Determination in the Neoplatonism of Proclus*, in M. Treschow–W. Otten–W. Hannam eds., *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr. Robert D. Crouse* (Leiden–Boston, 2007), 141–172. In his paper, MacIsaac defends the thesis (that he himself presents as not universally accepted: see ibid., 160) that the henads are above the One-Being (ibid., 149) and below the couple of primordial opposites Limit–Unlimitedness (ibid., 160 and 144, note 10, where he refers to Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* [1996], 175–179). He also reports C. D'Ancona's more nuanced position, according to which the henads are placed by Proclus both below and above the couple of primordial opposites Limit–Unlimitedness (id., Proclo: enadi e arxai nell'ordine sovrasensibile: *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*: 47 [2] [1992] 265–294). T. Lankila, however (id., Henadology in the two Theologies of Proclus: *Dionysius* [28] [2010] 68–69), points out the apparent discrepancy between Proclus' *Elementa theologica*, propositions 89, 90 and 159 Dodds (which place the henads below the couple Limit–Unlimitedness) and Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 9, 36, 10–16 Saffrey–Westernik, where he regards Limit and Unlimitedness as henads and chooses to follow G. van Riel's position (id., Les hénads de Proclus sont-elles composée de Limite et d'Illimité? *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* [85] [2001/3] 428), saying that at least Limit must be conceived of as a henad (ibid., 72, 74). Lankila also criticizes E. Butler (id., *Essays on the Metaphysics of Polytheism in Proclus* [New York City, 2014]) for reducing the One to the henads (ibid., 72). On the relationship between the One, Limit, Unlimitedness and the Soul see J. Trouillard, *L'une et l'ame selon Proclus* (Paris, 1972), 69–77; 86–89.
19 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 21, 73, 16–21 Saffrey–Westernik.
20 Ibid., III. 21, 74, 1–8 Saffrey–Westernik. See also ibid., 22, 80, 24–27.
21 On the concept of analogy in Proclus, see for example Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 1, 5–5, 17, 25–30 as well as the following fundamental contribution: A. Sheppard, *Phantasia and Analogia in Proclus*, in D. Hinnes–H. Hine–C. Pelling eds., *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russel in His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford, 1995), 343–351.
22 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 18 Dodds.
23 On apophaticism in Proclus, see D. Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena* (Leuven, 1995), 160–187.

24 Plato, *Epistula VII*, 323 D 4 Burnet; *Res publica*, VI 506 E 4–5 Burnet.
25 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 21, 73, 25–74, 5 Saffrey–Westernik.
26 Ibid., V. 16, 54, 14–25–55, 1–10 Saffrey–Westernik.
27 Plato, *Epistula VII* 323 D 4 Burnet; *Res publica* VI 506 E 4–5 Burnet.
28 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* I. 311, 25–313, 2 Diehl.
29 Plato, *Timaeus*, 42 D 6 Burnet.
30 On this, see J. Opsomer, To Find the Maker and Father. Proclus' Exegesis of Plato's: *Tim. 28c3–5*: *Etudes Platoniciennes* (2) (2006) 267. Id., *Proclus on Demiurgy and Procession in the Timaeus*, in Wright, *Reason and Necessity* (2000), 116–119; id., La démiurgie des jeunes dieux selon Proclus: *Les Études Classiques* (71) (2003) 5–9; 23–33.
31 Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 1070, 12–32–1071, 1–3 Cousin.
32 Ibid., 1070, 16–17. Dillon rightly points out that Proclus is referring to Origen the Platonist and Porphyry: Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Morrow–Dillon trans. (1987), 424, n. 46. See also Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 1091, 10–14; 1096, 26–30 Cousin as well as Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, II. 4. 31, 1–25 Saffrey–Westernik, where Proclus mentions Origen the Platonist by name, saying that according to him the apophatic connotations that Plato gives to the One in the First Hypothesis must be interpreted in the sense that Plato wanted to deprive the One of any real existence. Proclus rejects this interpretation since, properly speaking, neither does the One exist in the same sense as the One-Being nor is it non-existent as if it were deprived of any real substance (on this see also Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 1058, 11–21; 1065–1067 Cousin; Proclus, *In Parmenidem, pars ultima adhuc inedita, interprete Guillelmo de Moerbeke*, R. Klibansky–L. Labowski eds. [London, 1953, repr. 1973], 36; 64 [where Proclus refers again to Origen the Platonist]). Damascius too levels the same accusation to Porphyry: see Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, vols. 1–2, C. É. Ruelle ed. (Paris, 1889), I. 43, 86, 1–23–87, 1–4.
33 The same position is held by Proclus in his *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 4, 210, 15–19 in *Oracula chaldaica*, É. des Places ed. and trans., 3rd ed. (Paris, 2010), 202–212 = J. B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, V (Rome–Paris, 1888), 194, 29–35.
34 Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem* 1137, 19 Cousin. See also ibid., 763, 6 Cousin.
35 Thomas Aquinas will forgive us if we borrow this expression from him; see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae prima pars*–Testo latino dell'Edizione Leonina–Traduzione italiana a cura dei Frati Domenicani–Introduzioni di Giuseppe Barzaghi (Bologna, 2014), I. Q. 28, A. 1–4. A close comparison of Proclus' theological system with that of Thomas Aquinas cannot be undertaken here. However, it can be generally said that while Thomas, together with the preceding Christian theological tradition, makes the effort not to separate God's absolute oneness from its triadic/Trinitarian nature, on the contrary Proclus situates the level of the triad of Father – Power – Intellect (which comes very close to the Christian Trinity) well below the dimension in which the One is located. On the influence of Proclus on medieval philosophy see E. P. Bos–P. A. Meijer eds., *On Proclus and His Influence on Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1992).
36 Suda, *Lexicon*, A. Adler ed., vols. 1–4 (Leipzig, 1935), IV. 178, 22. For a list of other ancient sources who mention Porphyry's treatise, see Porphyry, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*, A. Smith–D. Wasserstein eds. (Stuttgard–Leipzig, 1993), P. 47, frgs. 362 (where Suda mentions the title previously quoted); 363 (where Marinus talks about Porphyrian 'commentaries . . . on the contents of the books of the Chaldeans' [ὑπομνήμασιν . . . τοῖς Πορφυρίου . . . εἰς τὰ λόγια καὶ τὰ σύστοιχα τῶν Χαλδαίων]); 365 (where John Lydus confines himself to saying

that Porphyry wrote a 'commentary on the Oracles' [ὑπομνήματι τῶν λογίων]; 368 (where Aeneas of Gaza gives the following title, which differs from Suda's: 'The Oracles of the Chaldeans' [τῶν Χαλδαίων τὰ λόγια]).

37 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1968), 258–259.

38 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 43, 86, 1–23–87, 1–4 Ruelle. This is fragment 367 in Smith's collection of Porphyry's fragments and testimonies.

39 Fr. 27 des Places.

40 On this, see Iamblichus, *Summa pitagorica–Vita di Pitagora, Esortazione alla filosofia, Scienza matematica comune, Introduzione all'aritmentica di Nicomaco, Teologia dell'aritmetica*, F. Romano trans. (Milan, 2006), 21.

41 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, VIII, 2, 262, 1–15 des Places. See also Iamblichus, *Iamblichi Calcidiensis–In platonis dialogos commentariorum fragmenta*, frgs. 29–35 Dillon.

42 Ibid., VIII, 1, 262, 7–9 des Places. On Hermes Trismegistus and the *Corpus Hermeticum*, see G. Fowden, *The Egytian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

43 See Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 20, 71, 10–25–72, 1–10; III, 20, 72, 19 (τὸ δὲ ἕν ὄν, τῇ πρώτῃ [*scil*. τριάδι]); III, 24, 84, 4–9; III. 27, 93, 1–15. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 689, 26–29; 1021, 31–40 Cousin and compare Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, E. C. Clarke–J. M. Dillon–J. P. Hershbell trans. (Atlanta, 2003), 307, note 401 and 309, note 405.

44 *Oracula chaldaica*, fr. 27 des Places. As R. Majercik has clearly said, Damascius' interpretation of the role of the monad in the divine hierarchy is influenced by Proclus, of whom this author quotes several relevant passages; see id., Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations: *The Classical Quarterly* 1 (51) (2001), 273.

45 This is what C. Metry-Tresson thinks; she quotes Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 99, 254, 1–3 Ruelle, where Damascius explicitates this identification; see id., *L'aporie ou l'experience des limites de la pensée dans la* Pèri Archón *de Damascius* (Leiden–Boston, 2012), 188. Of the same idea is J. Combès, see id., *Études néoplatoniciennes* (Grenoble, 1996), 301; id., *Symbolique de l'intellect dans l'*In Parmenidem *de Damascius*, in M.-O. Goulet Cazè–G. Madec–D. O' Brien eds., *ΣΟΦΙΕΣ ΜΑΙΗΤΟΡΕΣ,* «Chercheurs de sagesse» – Hommage a Jean Pepin (Paris, 1992), 433–450; id., *Hyparxis et hypostasis chez Damascius*, in F. Romano–D. P. Taormina eds., *Hyparxis ed hypostasis nel neoplatonismo*–Atti del 1° Colloquio internazionale del Centro di ricerca sul neoplatonismo (Catania, 1–3 ottobre, 1992) (Firenze, 1994), 131–147.

46 Concerning the structure of Damascius' metaphysical hierarchy, see C. Metry-Tresson, *L'aporie* (2012), 133–190; a summary description of it can be found at pages 151 and 164.

47 On this, see J. Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes* (1996), 332, 334–335; id., *Hyparxis et hypostasis chez Damascius* in Romano–Taormina, *Hyparxis ed hypostasis* (1994), 131–147.

48 Compare R. Majercik, Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis (2001) 271–272. 'The Father', or to be precise 'προπάτηρ', is a designation of the First Principle in Valentinian Gnosticism (see Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, W. W. Harvey ed., vol. 1 [Cambridge, 1857], I. 1, 1, 1–3). In confirming this information, Hippolytus of Rome points out that the Valentinians interpreted the Father as the ingenerated, incorruptible, incomprehensible and creative monad (Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, P. Wendland ed., vol. 3 [Leipzig, 1916], VI, 29, 1–3). In Valentinian Gnosticism, the Father, unknowable to inferior entities, manifests Himself in his Nous (Clement of Alexandria. *Excerpta ex*

Theodoto, F. Sagnard ed., 2nd ed. [Paris, 1948; repr. 1970], 1, 7, 1, 1–4). The Ophites too regard the Father as First Principle, calling Him 'Abyss' (Βυθός), a concept that is used for the First Principle in the *Chaldean Oracles* as well (see frgs. 18 and 163 des Places): Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, I. 30, 1 Harvey. See also Epiphanius, *Ancoratus und Panarion*, K. Holl ed. (Leipzig, 1915, 1922, 1933), I. 390, 5, 3–4. With regard to the concept of the Father in Nag-Hammadi Gnosticism, see *The Tripartite Tractate*, in H. W. Attridge ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1985), I, 51–57. *The Apocryphon of John–Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1 and IV,1 with BG 8502, 2*, M. Waldstein–F. Wisse eds. (Leiden, 1995), II. 2, 25–30 ('[And I asked] to [know it, and he said] to me, "The Monad [is a] monarchy with nothing above it. [It is he who exists] as [God] and Father of everything, [the invisible] One who is above [everything, who exists as] incorruption, which is [in the] pure light into which no [eye] can look"', in J. M. Robinson ed., *The Nag-Hammadi Library in English* [San Fransisco, 1990], 106). *The Gospel of the Egyptians (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit) – Nag Hammadi Codices III, 2 and IV, 2*, A. Böhlig–F. Wisse–P. Labib eds. (Leiden, 1975), III. 40–41, 12 ('The [holy] book [of the Egyptians] about the great invisible [Spirit, the] Father whose name cannot be uttered, [he who came] forth from the heights of [the perfection, the] light of the light of the [aeons of light], the light of the [silence of the] providence <and> the Father of the silence, the [light] of the word and the truth, the light [of the incorruptions, the] infinite light, [the] radiance from the aeons of light of the unrevealable, unmarked, ageless, unproclaimable Father, the aeon of the aeons, Autogenes, self-begotten, self-producing, alien, the really true aeon', in *The Nag-Hammadi Library in English*, Robinson trans., 209). For parallels in Hermetic literature, see *Corpus Hermeticum*, A. D. Nock–A.-J. Festugière eds., 2nd ed., (Paris, 1960), I, 6 (where the Father is presented as Nous that is always accompanied by his Logos); 12; 15, 43 (on the androgynous nature of the Father); 21 (on Father as Light); 27, 67–68 and 30, 78–79 (devotional relationship with the Father); 31, 79 ('πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων' or 'Father of all things'); II. 17, 26 (God must be designated as 'Father' by virtue of his power of creating all things); V. 2, 4 (the Father as source of the One 'καὶ οὐχ ἑνί, ἀλλ' ἀφ' οὗ ὁ εἷς'); 10, 26–27 (all things have come into existence from the Father); VIII, 2, 6–7 (eternity and immortality of the Father); 5, 20 (the will of the Father); IX, 8, 29 (God, Father of the world); X, 2, 4; 3, 12 (the Father is identified with the Platonic Good); XII, 15 (the will of the Father again); XIII; XIV, 3 (God, the Father); XIV, 4 (Father as the supreme Creator); XVIII, 12, 20 (a reference to the infinite Power of the Father); Asclepius, 9, 11–12; 20, 11; 26, 1.

49 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 117, 300, 13–14; 302, 24–303, 1 Ruelle. See also ibid., 119, 307, 23–27; 120, 309, 16–22; 121, 312–314.

50 Ibid., I. 50, 100, 19–101, 1–2 Ruelle (οἱ δὲ θεοὶ μετὰ τὸν ἕνα θεὸν πάτερα καὶ δύναμιν ὡς δυάδα μόνον ἐκφαίνουσι).

51 Ibid., I. 121, 313, 20–21 Ruelle.

52 Ibid., I. 111, 289, 16–17 Ruelle.

53 Porphyry, *Commentario al Parmenide di Platone*, Saggio introduttivo, testo con apparati critici e note di commento a cura di Pierre Hadot–Presentazione di Giovanni Reale–Traduzione e bibliografia di Giuseppe Girgenti (Milan, 1993).

54 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 102–143.

55 On the *status quaestionis*, see D. Clark, *The anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides*, in H. Tarrant–F. Renaud–D. Baltzly–D. A. Layne, *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity* (Leiden, 2017), 360–362 with relevant literature quoted in the footnotes.

56 *Porfirio–Commentario al Parmenide di Platone*, IX, 92^{r}, 1–20 Hadot.

57 *Oracula chaldaica*, frgs. 5, 7, 33, 36–37, 39, 108, 109 des Places. Majercik regards this as a reasonable possibility; see id., Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations: *The Classical Quarterly* 1 (51) (2001) 267.
58 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 255–296.
59 Plotinus, *Ennead VI*. 6–9 – with an English Translation by A. H. Armstrong, vol. 7 (Cambridge, MA-London, 1988), VI. 8 [39], 18, 20–27.
60 See also Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 94, 234–237 and 96, 239–246 Ruelle.
61 This very effective translation from the Greek is taken from Plotino, *Enneadi*– Traduzione di Roberto Radice, saggio introduttivo, prefazioni e note di commento di Giovanni Reale–Porfirio, 'Vita di Plotino' a cura di Giuseppe Girgenti (Milan, 2002), 1917 and note 67.
62 See also P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 273, 306.
63 The possibility that the anonymous author wanted to identify the Father with the One is excluded by J. D. Turner, *The Chaldean Oracles and the Metaphysics of the Sethian Platonizing Treatises*, in J. D. Turner–K. Corrigan eds., *Plato's Parmenides and its Heritage, vol. 1: History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to Later Platonism and Gnosticism* (Atlanta, 2010), 42–43. On the exegesis of the Chaldean Father proposed by the author of the *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, see also R. Majercik, Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations (2001), 266–268. It must be pointed out that this author believes the anonymous commentator to be Porphyry (see ibid.).
64 R. Majercik, Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis (2001), 268.
65 On this see Introduction, par. 3.
66 Proclus, *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, 51, 10 Westernik.
67 *Oracula chaldaica*, fr. 11 des Places. See also ibid., frgs. 12, 26 des Places.
68 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 13, 1–2 Dodds; Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, II. 6, 40, 10–20 Saffrey–Westernik.
69 Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 58 Klibansky–Labowsky = fragment 9 A Majercik.
70 Quoted in ibid., 594 note 120.
71 H. D. Saffrey, Les Néoplatoniciennes et les: *Oracles Chaldaïques* (1981), 224.
72 Proclus, *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 202–212 des Places.
73 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, W. Kroll ed., vols. 1–2 (Leipzig, 1899, repr. Amsterdam, 1965), I. 7, 226, 5–14.
74 On this concept in Proclus, see C. Steel, *Hyparxis chez Proclus*, in Romano–Taormina, *Hyparxis e Hypostasis nel neoplatonismo* (Firenze, 1994), quoted in S. Gertz, *From Immortal to Imperishable: Damascius on the Final Argument in Plato's Phaedo*, in Delcomminette – d'Hoine–Gavray, *Ancient Readings of Plato's Phaedo* (2015), 254, note 26. Gertz explains that according to Steel the term 'hyparxis' in Proclus means 'either *essence* of something or its *existence*'. On this, see P. Hadot, *L'être et l'étant dans le néoplatonisme*, in J. Trouillard–P. Hadot–H. Dörrie–F. Brunner–M. de Gandillac–S. Breton eds., *Études neoplatoniciennes* (Neuchatel, 1973), 27–41 as well as L. Siorvanes, who writes (id., *Proclus–Neo-Platonic Philosophy* and Science [1996], 110): '*Ousia* means the reality of a thing, its substance, while hyparxis is pure existence. So, along with "being" (on), they are as good as synonyms. The key difference is that hyparxis alone is broad enough to cover the level of pure unity of the divine.' See also ibid. 166 ('Being's pure essence is thus no actual being, but a unity with existence [hyparxis]'), 170 (on the henads as 'hyparxeis' endowed with 'unqualified existence, unconditioned even by being'), 172 (hyparxis as 'unqualified existence'). On hyparxis as 'supra-essential existence' see also G. van Riel, *The One, the Henads and the Principle*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 89–90 (with reference to the One-Being), 93 (with reference to the henads).
75 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 7, 226, 12–14 Kroll.

76 R. Majercik, Chaldean Triads in Neo-Platonic exegesis (2001), 278.
77 Ibid., 278, note 58.
78 Ibid.
79 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 267–278 and notes 6 and 7. Among other ancient witnesses, Hadot (ibid., 267 note 6) quotes as proof Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 44, 87, 10 and 61, 131, 17 Ruelle, where it is written: 'ἡ μὲν πρώτη ἀρχὴ κατὰ τὴν ὕπαρξιν θεωρεῖται, ὡς ἐν τοῖς λογίοις'.
80 R. Majercik, Chaldean Triads in Neo-Platonic Exegesis (2001), 279.
81 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 38, 78, 16–18 Ruelle: 'καὶ τὸν πρώτιστον λέγω πάντων προσδιορισμῶν καὶ σχεδὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀδιορίστου καταπινόμενον, ὥστε δύναμιν τοῦ πρώτου τὸ δεύτερον εἶναι δοκεῖν, δύναμιν τῇ ὑπάρχει συμπεπηγυῖαν, ὡς ἤδη τινὲς ἱερολόγοι τοῦτο αἰνίττονται' ('I mean the very first of all distinctions, that which would be absorbed, more or less, by the undetermined, so that the second principle seems to be the Power of the first, a Power which has been conflated with existence, as certain authors of the sacred texts already hint at'): R. Majercik trans. in id., Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis (2001), 279.
82 Id., Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis (2001), 279.
83 Ibid., 280.
84 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 61,131,15–18 Ruelle: 'οὐκοῦν ἡ μὲν πρώτη ἀρχὴ κατὰ τὴν ὕπαρξιν θεωρεῖται, ὡς ἐν τοῖς λογίοις, ἡ δὲ δευτέρα κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν σαφῶς οὕτω καὶ λέγεται· ἡ τρίτη ἄρα προσπλήψεται καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν'.
85 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 221, 101, 26 Ruelle: 'επεὶ καί, ὡς χαλδαϊκῶς εἰπεῖν, ὁ μὲν νοῦς κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἵσταται μᾶλλον, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν, ἡ δὲ οὐσία κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ὕπαρξιν.'
86 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 120, 309, 25–310, 1–3 Ruelle: 'Τὸν μὲν οὖν πατέρα σαφῶς ὕπαρξιν ὀνομάζει, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν οὐδὲ ἄλλῳ ὀνόματι παραδίδωσιν.'
87 Ibid., I. 120, 309, 24–25 Ruelle: ''Η πρότερόν γε ἡμεῖς διὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ τοῦ ἡνωμένου, τοῦτο οἱ χρησμοὶ τῶν θεῶν διὰ τῆς ὑπάρξεως καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ ἐνεργείας.'
88 R. Majercik, Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis (2001), 280–281.
89 J. Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes* (1996), 330–331; id., *Hyparxis et hypostasis chez Damascius* in, Romano–Taormina, *Hyparxis ed hypostasis nel neoplatonismo* (1994), 131–147.
90 On the 'theological' sense of the term δύναμις in Proclus see Proclo, *Commento alla Repubblica di Platone*, M. Abbate ed. and trans. (Milan, 2004), 383 note 64.
91 The explanation of the multifarious aspects of δύναμις with particular reference to the concept of 'spiritual movement' in Proclus' philosophy constitutes the main objective of S. Gersh's fundamental work entitled *ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΣ* (1973), to which we refer the interested reader.
92 On the mediating role of Power see Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 24, 85, 20–21; IV. 27, 79, 20–25; VI. 8, 42, 10 Saffrey–Westernik (where fragment 4 des Places is quoted). See also *Excerpta e Platonica Procli theologia* in *Procli Philosophi Platonici opera inedita* Cousin, 1247, 10–11, 20; 1248, 5–6.
93 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 8, 31, 19–23 Saffrey–Westernik.
94 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 238, 24–29 Kroll.
95 Ibid., 239, 7–9.
96 Ibid., 239, 13–17.
97 Ibid., 239, 16–17. See also ibid., 266, 18–23, where Proclus refuses to accept the identification of Being with Power proposed in Plato's *Sophista* 247 E 3–4 B Burnet, since for him Power is inferior to the first member of the triad, that

is, Being/Hyparxis/Father. See also Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 14, 51, 22–27; 21, 74, 11–15; III. 24, 84, 20–23 Saffrey–Westernik and *Procli Diadochi tria opuscola*, H. Boese ed. (Berlin, 1960), 53, 15.

98 In describing Limit and Unlimitedness in the *Platonic Theology*, Proclus defines them as ἐκφάνεις or 'manifestations' of the One. We think that the same term could be applied to Power in relation to Unlimitedness and to Father in relation to Limit; see ibid., III. 9. 36, 10–20 Saffrey–Westernik.

99 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 21, 73, 19–21; 12, 45, 3–5; 14, 51, 3–7. Saffrey–Westernik.

100 Ibid., 21, 73, 19–21 Saffrey–Westernik.

101 Ibid., 21, 76, 10–12 Saffrey–Westernik.

102 Plato, *Timaeus*, 41 A 7 Burnet.

103 Ibid., 41 C 5–6 Burnet. See also Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 16, 58, 11–28–59, 1–13 Saffrey–Westernik.

104 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 21, 76, 7–16 Saffrey–Westernik.

105 Ibid., 26, 90, 1–2. Saffrey–Westernik. See also ibid., IV. 28, 81, 7–8; V. 39, 145, 3 Saffrey–Westernik.

106 This is a term of Chaldean derivation, since it can be found in fr. 32, 1 des Places.

107 G. van Riel rightly points out that 'the connection between apeiron and dunamis is occasioned by the *Chaldean Oracles*': see id., *The One, the Henads and the Principle*s, in d'Hoine-Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 83.

108 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, VI. 8, 42, 22–24 (ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ δύναμις ἅτε τῷ ἀπείρῳ σύστοιχος οὖσα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀπειρία τις οὖσα, πλήθους ἐστὶν αἰτία καὶ διαιρέσεως τοῖς ὅλοις). See also Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 42, 13, 19–20 Pasquali. On the relationship between Power and Unlimitedness see G. van Riel, Les hénads de Proclus sont-elles composée de Limite et d'Illimité? (2001) 417–418.

109 Ibid., IV. 27, 79, 23–24; 28, 81, 5–10; 30, 90, 16–18; V. 37, 138, 15–20 Saffrey–Westernik. See also ibid., III. 24, 84, 15–20; 25, 87, 5–15 Saffrey–Westernik.

110 Ibid., IV. 30, 91, 24–26. This is explicitly said by Proclus in his *Platonis Timaeum commentaria* I. 389, 25 Diehl: 'δύναμις δὲ μήτηρ.'

111 Ibid., IV. 2, 12, 11–14 Saffrey–Westernik

112 Ibid., III. 12, 44, 23–45, 4 Saffrey–Westernik. On this see G. van Riel, Horizontalism or Verticalism? Proclus vs Plotinus on the Procession of Matter: *Phronesis* (46) 147–148; id., Les hénads de Proclus sont-elles composée de Limite et d'Illimité ? (2001) 427.

113 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 92, 3 Dodds.

114 On the concept of the Father's (or First Principle's) Power in Gnostic literature see Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, I. 1, 13, 6; 24, 1, 3, 4; 25, 1 Harvey. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, VI. 9, 3–6; 12, 3–4; 14, 4; 17, 1–2, 6–7; 18, 3–4 Wendland. *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, I. B 5 Attridge. *The Gospel of Truth*, I. 16, 34; 26, 30; 39, 5; 39, 10 Attridge; *The Tripartite Tractate*, I. 53, 5; 55, 35; 56, 15; 57, 30; 64, 35; 68, 25; 69, 40; 126, 15 Attridge. *The Apocryphon of John*, II. 4, 30–35; 5, 20; 6, 20; 9, 10; 26, 10–15 Waldstein–Wisse. *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, II. 94, 25; 96, 1 Waldstein–Wisse. *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, III. 51, 15 Böhlig–Wisse–Labib. *The Dialogue of the Saviour*, III. 121, 10 Waldstein–Wisse. *The (First) Apocalypse of James–The (Second) Apocalypse of James*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codices V, 2–5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4*, D. M. Parrot ed. (Leiden, 1979), V. 41, 15; 55, 5. *The Thunder: Perfect Mind*, VI. 13, 1 Parrot. *The Concept of our great Power*, VI. 36, 1–25; 40, 25; 45, 5; 47, 30 Parrot. *The Discourse on the Eight and Nine*, VI. 56, 15, 25 Parrot. *The Paraphrase of Shem*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codex VII*, A. B. Pearson ed. (Leiden, 1996), VII. 2, 10; 6, 20; 9, 10; 10, 20; 17, 5; 35, 5;

41, 25. *The Teachings of Silvanus*, VII, 113, 1 Pearson. *The Three Steles of Seth*, VII. 121, 30; 123, 25 Pearson. *Zostrianos*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codex VIII*, J. H. Sieber ed. (Leiden, 1991), VIII, 17, 5; 20, 20; 24, 10–15; 118, 10; 123, 20; 124, 1; 128, 20. *The Letter of Peter to Philip*, VIII. 137, 25 Sieber. *Marsanes*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codices IX-X*, B. A. Pearson ed. (Leiden, 1981), X. 6, 20; 7, 25; 8, 5–10, 20; 9, 10–25; 10, 10. *Allogenes*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, C. W. Hedrick ed. (Leiden, 1990), XI, 45, 6–25; 47, 5–10; 52, 15–30; 54, 20; 58, 25; 61, 1–20. See also *Corpus Hermeticum*, XI. With regard to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, it does not seem that Power played the role of an independent hypostasis as in the Chaldean system. Power seems to play some role in the 'Mithras Liturgy': H. D. Betz, *The "Mithras Liturgy": Text, Translation and Commentary* (Tübingen, 2003), 640.

115 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 21, 77, 6–8 Saffrey–Westernik.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid., III. 12, 44, 21–22.

118 Ibid., III. 9, 35, 4–7.

119 Ibid., III, 12, 45, 6–12 (where the One-Being is said to have placed its residence at the summit of the intelligible triad, that is, the first intelligible triad . . . ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς τοῖς πρωτίστοις ἀκρότητα); III, 20, 72, 19–22; 14, 50, 1–15.

120 Ibid., III, 9, 37, 11–20.

121 G. van Riel, *One, the Henads and the Principle*s, in d'Hoine-Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 86.

122 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 1, 6, 1–10, 15. See also R. Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (2012), 94 and 96.

123 Ibid., III. 13, 47, 1–8.

124 On this see Trouillard, *L'une et l'ame selon Proclus* (1972), 91–109. See also S. Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden, 1978), 45–57.

125 On the entire process the most detailed analysis is Beierwaltes's; see id., *Proclo, I fondamenti della sua metafisica* (1990), 161–203; see also L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neoplatonic Philosophy and Science* (1996), 105–109; R. Chlup, *Proclus: an Introduction* (2012), 64–69.

126 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 27, 93, 4–18 Saffrey–Westernik.

127 Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 D 6 B Burnet.

128 Plato, *Parmenides*, 142 D 1 Burnet.

129 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 21, 74, 23–27–75, 1–11 Saffrey–Westernik.

130 'οὐ γὰρ ἐς ὕλην πῦρ ἐπέκεινα τὸ πρῶτον ἐὴν δύναμιν κατακλείει ἔργοις ἀλλὰ νόῳ· νοῦ γὰρ νόος ἐστιν ὁ κόσμου τεχνίτης πύριου', φησὶ τὸ λόγιον.'

131 This interpretation is supported by Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 113 and note 184.

132 The same separation between the 'Intellect of the Father' (νοῦς . . . πατρὸς), which establishes that all things be divided into three and the Intellect that directly governs them can be found in frg. 22 des Places.

133 (τόνδε νοεῖ πᾶς νοῦς θεόν).

134 See R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989) 55 and note at page 149.

135 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 71 and note at page 127.

136 (οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ νόος ἐστί νοητοῦ, καὶ τὸ νοητὸν οὐ νοῦ χωρὶς ὑπάρχει).

137 See Plotinus, *Ennead V* 1–9, with an English Translation by A.H. Armstrong (Harvard, MA–London, UK, 1984), V. 5 [32] 2–3.

138 On this see P. d'Hoine, *Platonic Forms and Being-Life-Intellect*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 102–103.

139 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 167.

140 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 127.

141 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 149.

142 See P. d'Hoine, *Platonic Forms and Being-Life-Intellect*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 103.
143 Ibid., 102–103.
144 On Intellect (often translated as 'Mind'or simply 'Nous' from the Coptic) in Gnostic literature, see Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, I. 1, 1,1; 1, 24, 3 Harvey. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, V. 10, 2; VI. 18, 3; 29, 6 Wendland. Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 1, 6, 3 Sagnard. *The Gospel of Truth*, I. 16, 35; 19, 35 Attridge. *The Tripartite Tractate*, I. 66, 15; 71, 30; 112, 30 Attridge. *The Apocryphon of John*, II. 4, 1; 7, 1–15; 8, 30 Waldstein–Wisse. *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, III. 42, 10 Böhlig–Wisse–Labib. *Eugnostos*, III. 77, 1 Waldestein–Wisse. *The Thunder: Perfect Mind*, VI. 13, 1–23, 32 Parrot. *The Discourse on the Eight and Nine*, VI, 58 Parrot. *The Paraphrase of Shem*, VII. 1, 1–49, 9 Pearson. *The Teachings of Silvanus*, VII. 85, 25; 86, 10–20; 92, 25; 96, 10; 112, 25; 117, 5 Pearson. *The Three Steles of Seth*, VII, 119, 1, 30; 123, 15–30; 125, 30 Pearson. *Zostrianos*, VIII. 18, 10; 30, 9; 44, 30; 124, 20 Sieber. *The second Treatise of the great Seth*, VII. 58, 1–30; 64, 10; 66, 30; 68, 20 Pearson. *The Thought of Norea*, IX. 27, 20–25; 28, 10, 20 Pearson. *A Valentinian Exposition*, XI, 22, 35; 23, 35; 24, 20; 25, 30 Hedrick. *Allogenes*, XI. 61, 35; 62, 20 Hedrick. On Intellect in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, see ibid., I. 6, 17, 19; 7, 5; 10, 3; 12, 1 (where the Father is identified with Intellect); 11, 1, 9, 13 (on the Demiurgic Nous); XI.
145 Plato, *Timaeus*, 32 C Burnet. On the ten gifts of Plato's Demiurge as interpreted by Proclus, see E. Kutash, *Ten Gifts of the Demiurge* (2011). With regard to the Demiurge's 'third gift', see ibid., 118–119.
146 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 56, 12–25 Diehl.
147 On these three hyper-cosmic gods, see Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, VI. 7, 31–10, 47 Saffrey–Westernik and Opsomer, La démiurgie des jeunes dieux selon Proclus (2003) 21–23.
148 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 57, 2–9 Diehl.
149 Ibid., 9–24.
150 On the creation and constitution of the world in the *Chaldean Oracles* see frgs. 36, 57, 61, 65, 67, 68, 69 des Places.
151 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 57, 24–58, 2 Diehl.
152 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 124.
153 On this see also H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 113 and note 184.
154 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 124.
155 *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, H. Diels–W. Kranz eds., 6th ed., vol. 1 (Berlin, 1951), 30, 31, 66, 67, 90.
156 See for example the following fragments where the concept of fire as divine principle of reality is present: *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, J. von Arnim ed., vols. 1–3 (Leipzig, 1905), I. 27, 98; 32, 107; 34, 120; 35, 124–126; 37–38, 134; 40, 146; 42, 157–158; 44, 171; 114, 512. II. 116, 327; 134, 408; 137, 414; 139, 423; 146, 443–445; 182, 590; 186, 611; 217, 774–775; 328, 1133. III. 264, 16; 267, 10.
157 See for example Plotinus, *Ennead II* – with an English Translation by A. H. Armstrong (Harvard, MA–London, UK, 1966), II. 4 [12] 3–4.
158 Plotinus, *Ennead IV* – with an English Translation by A. H. Armstrong (Harvard, MA–London, UK, 1984), IV. 7 [2] 4, 1–5.
159 See for example *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, I. 42, 157 von Arnim.
160 Themistius, *In libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis*, R. Heinze ed. (Berlin, 1899; repr., 2nd ed., 1960), V, 3, 35, 32–34.
161 Eusebius, *Werke, Band 8: Die Preparatio evangelica*, K. Mras ed. (Berlin, 1954; 1956), 15, 14, 1, 1–3–2, 1–7.

162 M. Terentius Varro, *De lingua latina quae supersunt, Accedunt grammaticorum Varronis librorum fragmenta*, G. Goetz–F. Schoell eds. (Leipzig, 1910; repr. Amsterdam, 2nd ed., 1964), V, 59.
163 Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, C. Wachsmuth–O. Hense eds., vols. 1–5 (Berlin, 1884–1912; repr., 2nd ed., 1958), I. 129, 25–40.
164 Ibid., 28–29 Wachsmuth–Hense.
165 Aetius, *Placita*, in H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin, 1879; repr., 3rd ed., 1958), I. 7, 23.
166 Augustine, *Contra academicos*, W. M. Green ed. (Utrecht, 1955–1956), III. 17, 38.
167 Augustine, *De civitate dei*, in A. Kalb, *Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum teubneriana*, 1104–1105, vols. 1–2 (Leipzig, 1928–1929), VIII. 5.
168 See L. Robert, Un oracle gravé à Oinoanda: *Compte rendus de séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 3 (115) (1971) 610. See also id., Trois oracles de la Théosophie et un prophète d'Apollon: *Compte rendus de séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 4 (112) (1968) 568–599. E. Livrea, Sull'iscrizione teosofica di Enoanda: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (122) (1998) 90–96. G. Sfameni Gasparro, Oracoli e teologia: *praxis* oracolare e riflessioni: *Kernos* (26) (2013) 139–156. Id., Gli 'oracoli teologici' fra pagani e cristiani – temi e problemi a confronto, in H. Seng–Giulia Sfameni Gasparro eds., *Theologische Orakel in der Spätantike* (Heidelberg, 2016), 329–350. S. Mitchell, *The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews and Christians*, in Athanassiadi–Frede, *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1999) 81–148. A. Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon*–Pratiques et traditions oraculaires dans l'Antiquité tardive IIe-VIe siècle (Leiden–Boston, 2005), 32–40, which offers a survey of the academic debate originated by L. Robert's article (as well as a datation of the inscription different from the one suggested by L. Robert and followed by us); it must be said that the entire book is a treasure trove of information on late antique Apollonian oracles. Id., *Le problème de l'attribution de textes oraculaires au sanctuaire de Claros*, in J.-C. Moretti–L. Rabatel eds., *Le sanctuaire de Claros et son oracle*–Actes du colloque international de Lyon, 13–14 janvier 2012 (Lyon, 2014), 201–258. C. Tommasi Moreschini, La nozione di "Oracoli teologici" nella recente considerazione critica (con una postilla landolfiana): *Annali di scienze religiose* (6) (2013) 191–208.
169 L. Robert, Un oracle gravé à Oinoanda (1971), 602.
170 *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia*, P. F. Beatrice ed. (Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2001).
171 P. F. Beatrice, Pagan Wisdom and Christian Theology According to the *Tübingen Theosophy*: *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (3) (1995) 403–418. Id., Traditions apocryphes dans la *Théosophie de Tübingen*: *Apocrypha* (7) (1996) 109–122. H. D. Saffrey, *Connaissance et inconnaissance de Dieu: Porphyre et la Théosophie de Tübingen*, in J. Duffy–J. Peradotto eds., *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75* (Buffalo, 1988), 1–20 = id., *Recherches sur le néoplatonisme après Plotin* (1990), 11–30. H. van Kasteel, La *Théosophie de Tübingen*, in id., ed., *Oracles et prophétie*–La philosophie des oracles de Porphyre–La *Théosophie de Tübingen* (Grez Doiceau, 2011), 115–125. T. Sardella, *Oracolo pagano e rivelazione cristiana nella Theosophia di Tubinga*, in C. Giuffrida–M. Mazza eds., Le trasformazioni della cultura nella Tarda Antichità, vol. 2 (Roma, 1985), 545–573. A. D. Nock, Oracles Theologiques: *Revue des Études Anciennes* 4 (30) (1928) 280–290, now in id. *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1972), 160–168. A. Busine, *Théosophie dite de Tübingen*, in R. Goulet ed., *Dictionaire des philosophes antiques*, vol. 6 (Paris, 2016), 1–3.
172 *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia*, I. 2, 14–25 Beatrice.

173 Ibid., 25–29; see also ibid., 4, 42–44; 18, 163–169 Beatrice.
174 See also É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 51 (φάος πῦρ αἰθέρα κόσμους). Michael Psellos, *Philosophica minora* II, *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, éd. D. J. O'Meara (Leipzig, 1989), II. 39, 146, 9–12 = É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 188.
175 Ibid., fr. 108 des Places.
176 We have already summarized the views of these scholars in Introduction, paragraph 3.
177 Numenius, *Fragmenta*, É. des Places ed. and trans. (Paris, 1973), 42–61.
178 Ibid., 11, 3–4, 11–16; 12, 17–22 des Places.
179 Ibid., 12, 2–4 des Places.
180 Ibid., 15, 5 des Places.
181 Ibid., 20, 10 des Places.
182 Ibid., 17 des Places.
183 Ibid., 22 des Places.
184 Ibid., 21 des Places.
185 P. Athanassiadi, The Chaldean Oracles: Theology and Theurgy, in Athanassiadi–Frede, *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1999), 153–156. See also id., *Apamea and the Chaldean Oracles: A Holy City and a Holy Book*, in A. Smith ed., *The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Brown* (Swansea, 2005), 121–133.
186 For example, the author believes that an inscription found on the surface of an altar of Bel in Apamea that says, 'To the ruler of fortune Belus, Sextus dedicated an altar in remembrance of the Apamean oracles', refers to the *Chaldean Oracles* (here called 'Apamean oracles'), which would then have been written in Numenius' birthplace and, for this reason, linked with him: P. Athanassiadi, *The Chaldean Oracles: Theology and Theurgy*, in Athanassiadi–Frede, *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1999), 155.
187 A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Paris, 1950; reprint 1990), 52–59; id., ibid., vol. IV (Paris, 1954), 132–140.
188 E. R. Dodds, New Light on the Chaldean Oracles: *The Harvard Theological Review*, 4 (54) (1961) 270–271.
189 Ibid., 271.
190 Numénius, *Fragments*, É. des Places ed. and trans, fr. 19, 11–13.

2 The structure of the divine dimension

2.1 The single divine hypostases[1]

2.1.1 The paternal monad

Fragment 11 des Places = p. 15 Kroll (Proclus, *In Alc.*, 51, 8–13 Westernik)

> Now there are three substantial hypostases among the intelligible and hidden gods, and the first is characterized by the good ('**thinking the Good itself, where the paternal monad is**', says the Oracle), the second by wisdom, where the first intellection (is) and the third by beauty, where the most beautiful of the intelligibles is, as is the account of Timaeus.[2]

This passage is taken from the section of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's First Alcibiades* where he discusses the position of the god Eros within the divine hierarchy. We will come back to this section of Proclus' commentary again when we will analyse fragment 46 des Places, which deals specifically with this god.

Now we will confine ourselves to discussing the part of the passage where Proclus explains that three hypostases exist among the intelligible and hidden gods (ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς καὶ κρυφίοις θεοῖς): the first is characterized by the Good, the second by Wisdom and the third by Beauty. This is identified with the Platonic intelligible Living Being,[3] the second with the Demiurge's first intellectual perception (ἡ πρώτη νόησις) of the intelligible dimension, the first with the Good. Proclus studies this triad in the first book of his *Platonic Theology*, where he writes: 'Socrates says that all divine is beautiful, wise and good, and shows that this triad spreads to all processions of the gods'.[4]

We will confine ourselves to these few considerations, since to investigate this triad further would bring us too far from our main objective, which is to analyze Proclus' use and interpretation of fragment 11 des Places. We have already seen that the first member of the triad in question is the Good, and we also know that for Proclus the Good coincides with the One.[5] Proclus quotes fragment 11 to further reinforce the truthfulness of this concept with a declaration from the 'gods'.

This Chaldean fragment, however, introduces a further dimension which Proclus does not touch upon but that has great importance for our understanding of the Proclean exegesis of it: the fragment identifies the Good (in turn identified with the One by Proclus) with the 'paternal monad'. This is an interesting development, since in discussing Proclus' interpretation of the Chaldean Father, we have seen how strongly Proclus condemns those 'leading theologians' who identify the Father with the One/Good (*Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* 1070, 16–17 Cousin). On the contrary, here he seems to accept the identification of the paternal monad with the Good (and, therefore, with the One), so that the question arises whether Proclus is contradicting himself or not. A solution to this exegetical conundrum could be that here Proclus refers to the Good as equivalent to Being (with which the paternal monad for him coincides), on the basis of the principle of his philosophy according to which 'to be' and 'to be good' are the same (*Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 239, 16–17 Kroll).[6] If this were the case, there would be no contradiction with the stance he took in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, even if the fact that in this passage Proclus does not explain his choice of linking the paternal monad with the Platonic Good makes it impossible to come to a definitive solution of this problem.

2.1.2 The First Principle as the Ineffable

Fragment 191 des Places = p. 40 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 115, 67, 19–22 Pasquali)

> Based on these things (396 C Burnet) now (Socrates) thinks (it) worthy of mention that Hesiod omitted (to talk about) the beings prior to Uranus as being ineffable, since even the Oracles showed that these entities are **unutterable.**

Here Proclus wants to explain why Hesiod in his *Theogony* made no mention of the 'entities prior to Uranus' (that is, of the intelligible gods); in a previous part of this section from his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*, he had pointed out that this Greek poet also chose not to talk about the First Principle (τὸ πρῶτον).[7] According to Proclus, the reason for Hesiod's choice must be found in the fact that, since the First Principle is ineffable (ἀφθέγκτων) the wisest choice is to say nothing about it rather than to risk to debase its transcendence by trying to describe it with human words.[8] This however does not mean that Hesiod did not recognize its existence: quite the contrary. Proclus explains that by saying that Chaos was generated (*Theogony* 116 West)[9] Hesiod also implied that this entity must have had a cause, which can only be identified with the ineffable First Principle.[10]

Proclus thinks that, by defining the intelligible entities (as well as the First Principle) as 'ineffable', the *Chaldean Oracles* teach the same doctrine as Hesiod, showing the agreement existing between these two different

traditions. Of course, lacking the Chaldean context in which this word is used, it is impossible for us to establish with certainty whether Proclus' exegesis is correct, but this can well be possible, since the ineffability of the First Principle is the direct logical consequence of its transcendence. According to Lewy,[11] this term refers to the Father in His monadic aspect, which makes it First Cause of all things created. Majercik[12] finds Lewy's position 'problematic', but the list of Hermetic and Gnostic parallels to this Proclean passage she quotes[13] seems to confirm Lewy's position.

2.1.3 The hidden world

Fragment 198 des Places = p. 18, n. 2 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. I. 430, 2–10 Diehl)

> But why to say more? If indeed he has proceeded from the primordial egg, this myth also shows that he is the very first Living Being, if it is proper to hold fast to the analogy; for just as the egg has pre-contained the generative cause of the Living Being, so does the **hidden world** surround unitarily all the Intelligible, and just as the Living Being already possesses separately all that was in the egg seminally, so this god also brings forward into the light (what is) ineffable and incomprehensible in the first causes.

Majercik,[14] following Hadot,[15] believes the term 'κρύφιος' ('hidden') to be 'most likely an Orphic expression' that refers to the primordial egg from which according to Orphic mythology Phanes (identified by Proclus[16] with the Living Being of Plato's *Timaeus* 30 C Burnet) was born.[17] By pointing to this Proclean passage, Hadot establishes a direct connection between the concept of the Orphic egg and the 'hidden world' of fragment 198 des Places. The term could indeed belong to Orphic technical jargon but, as Majercik has rightly pointed out,[18] it could also be a Chaldean designation of the Father in his role of ineffable and unreachable (in the sense of 'hidden') Principle of reality. Finally, the fact that in his *On the Principles*, I. 110, 284, 7 Ruelle Damascius regards this concept as revealed by 'the gods' ('ὁι θεοὶ') can be further proof that it belongs to a Chaldean context. In Proclus, this term is referred to the first intelligible triad, from which the other two (including the Platonic Living Being, third member of the third intelligible triad) emerge.

2.1.4 The primal Power of the sacred **Logos**

Fragment 175 des Places = p. 13, n. 1 Kroll (Proclus, *Exc. chald*., 194, 31 Pitra[19])

> . . . and if in another (passage) this is what was said about the primal Father: '**And primal Power of the sacred Logos**', who is the one who is

> above this [the Father] and participating in whom [the Father] is said to be 'sacred'? And if he who manifests [Him], being unutterable, is called 'Logos', it is necessary that before this Logos there exists the Silence that brings this Logos into existence, and that before everything that is sacred the divinizing cause [exists].

This is one of the most difficult passages among those of des Places' collection of authentic fragments. It is taken from extract IV of what once was Proclus' treatise *On Chaldean Philosophy*, of which only five extracts remain, preserved by Psellus and edited for the first time by the Cardinal J. B. Pitra in the 19th century.[20] A big part of fragment 4 consists in a discussion of the soul's faculties of knowledge: *dianoetic*, with regard to divided beings, intellectual, in relation to intelligible ones, and super-intellectual when the soul comes to mystical union with the One.[21] The 'flower of Intellect' aims at assimilation with the intelligible dimension and with its summit (that for Proclus coincides with the Chaldean Father); the 'flower of the entire Soul' is capable of achieving union with the One.[22] The latter resembles the One much more than the former, since it includes all faculties of the soul, psychical as well as intellectual, in the same sense in which the One embraces all beings in itself.[23] As a consequence, while the flower of Intellect can lead to the intelligible Father only, the flower of the Soul is able to reach the One.[24] It is over the course of this interesting discussion, to which we will come back later,[25] that Proclus, in his effort to define what the flower of the Soul is, quotes fragment 175 des Places. The concept of Power is already familiar to us, as well as the Proclean idea that the Chaldean Father belongs to the intelligible dimension. The term 'λόγος' ('Logos') is instead mentioned here for the first time. This word appears only another time in des Places' collection, precisely in a fragment quoted by Psellus[26] where it is said that the return of the soul to the divine dimension is achieved by the theurgist by ritually 'joining the act to the sacred word' (ἱερῷ λόγῳ ἔργον ἑνώσας). In Proclus, the expression 'ἱέρος λόγος' is deprived of any connection with theurgic rituals, since it seems to be used to define a divine hypostasis higher than the Father (summit of the first intelligible triad) but lower than Silence (δεῖ πρὸ τοῦ λόγου τὴν τὸν λόγον ὑποστήσασαν εἶναι σιγήν). Des Places[27] has rightly pointed out that though the divine Silence mentioned here seems to be linked with the Silence of Gnostic doctrine, especially Valentinian, the term is Chaldean.[28] A variant of it ('σιγώμενος') is referred by Proclus to Cronus,[29] whom in his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*[30] he regards as established in the 'paternal silence', a reference to the intelligible dimension governed by the Chaldean Father.[31] In the case of our passage, Silence is said to precede the Logos, which is in turn regarded as higher than the Father. In the *Platonic Theology*,[32] silence is defined as the best way in which the One can be honoured.

We can conclude that in this passage Proclus identifies Silence with the One, but what about the Logos? This word is never used by Proclus to

describe divine hypostases, so it is peculiar that he uses it here in a metaphysical sense, and not in the ritual one in which it appears in fragment 110 des Places. Lewy,[33] Hadot[34] and, more recently, Majercik[35] have followed Proclus' interpretation, but none of these scholars has compared fragment 175 with fragment 110 des Places. Our hypothesis is that here Proclus (or could the culprit be the excerptor Psellus?) misinterprets the fragment by putting it in a context different from the original one, which, as in the case of fragment 110 des Places, described how the theurgist accomplished his spiritual ascent to the Father by availing himself of the 'primal Power of the sacred logos', that is, of a word of power which, as symbol of the Father, was capable of bringing the theurgist back to Him.[36]

2.1.5 ΑΠΑΞ ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΣ ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ

Fragment 169 des Places = p. 16 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 109, 59, 1–8 and 101, 52, 14–15 Pasquali)

> Some identify Cronus with the Cause of all things because He (is) indivisible, unitary, paternal and good towards intellectual beings but they do not speak in the right way. For (He) is only analogous to that (Cause), in the same sense as Orphaeus (fr. 50 Kern) calls the first Cause of everything 'Khronos' (Time), (who has) almost the same name as Cronus (fr. 68 Kern). But the gods-given Oracles give this divinity the attribute 'unitarily', saying '**unitarily transcendent**', since (being) 'unitarily' (is being) akin to the One.
>
> And what is it necessary to say? For here (they) call Him '**doubly transcendent**' and 'doubly there', and in short (they) honour Him through the dyad.

Having analyzed the concept of Silence, which, as we have seen, Proclus links with the One, let us focus on the couple ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα – δὶς ἐπέκεινα mentioned in two passages of his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*. In the first, Proclus resolutely denies the identification of the god Cronus with the One, put forward by unidentified interlocutors who mistake the unitary nature of Cronus, who represents the summit of the intellectual dimension,[37] for that of the One. On the contrary, Cronus, father of Zeus, called Κρόνος in Greek, merely resembles the One, which is identified by Orpheus with Time (Χρόνος);[38] according to Proclus, the Oracles too have talked about Time (Χρόνος), calling him 'unitarily transcendent' (ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα).[39]

The term 'ἅπαξ' could be translated as 'once', 'once only', 'once on a time' etc., while 'ἐπέκεινα' means 'beyond', so that Proclus' interpretation could well be in line with the Oracles', which, by using such an expression, wanted to refer to a Principle whose oneness was 'beyond' the ability of the human mind to grasp it. In this sense, the ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα strongly resembles Proclus' One itself. Unfortunately, this term is quoted in this fragment only, so that

no comparison can be made with possible different usages of it in other fragments.

Majercik[40] thinks that ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα and δὶς ἐπέκεινα coincide with the names 'Ad' and 'Adad' that according to Proclus the Chaldean theologians made use of to designate the One and the Demiurge respectively when they expressed themselves in their native Syrian language.[41]

With regard to the δὶς ἐπέκεινα, fragment 169 des Places clearly identifies it with the Demiurge by calling it a 'dyad' (the same thing do both fragment 8 des Places and Michael Psellus).[42] Another proof of this identification is, as Majercik (who in part follows Lewy)[43] points out,[44] given by Porphyry (quoted by John Lydus)[45] who identifies the δὶς ἐπέκεινα with the demiurgic god of the Jews. P. Hadot comes to the conclusion that according to the *Oracles* the ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα coincides with the Father, while the δὶς ἐπέκεινα with the Second Intellect or Demiurge.[46] Damascius' testimony is also important, since he places Hecate between ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα and δὶς ἐπέκεινα, saying that this mediates between the two (ἡ δὲ μέση Ἑκάτη, μετὰ μὲν τοῦ ἅπαξ μονοειδής, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ δίς, πολυμερής);[47] it is not clear whether or not Hecate forms a triad together with ἅπαξ and δὶς ἐπέκεινα,[48] all the more because no extant fragment says it explicitly, but Damascius is convinced that this is the case.[49] According to him, the δὶς ἐπέκεινα belongs to the intellectual triad and his role is to contemplate the ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα. He says:[50]

> these things are symbols of the middle order of the intellectual (gods) since intellection seems to consist in the δὶς ἐπέκεινα who thinks the ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα; and through (this intellection) the δὶς ἐπέκεινα always thinks the Father.

Against this interpretation H. Seng has proposed a new one, according to which δὶς ἐπέκεινα would represent the doubly (δὶς) transcendent (ἐπέκεινα) Intellect, that is the First Principle, while the ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα the once only transcendent, that is, the Second Intellect.[51] This author points out the tentative nature of his hypothesis,[52] which, though fascinating, seems not to be sufficiently based on available ancient sources. Moreover, the absence of other Chaldean fragments in which these terms are quoted represents another big problem to overcome for this theory. In conclusion, we believe it wiser to maintain the traditional interpretation, until new evidence could shed more light on the nature of these two Chaldean expressions.

2.1.6 The Intellectual Fire

Fragment 81 des Places = p. 42 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm*. 941, 11–15, 27–28 Cousin)

> This is the reason why in the secondary order as well the more universal rules over the more particular and the more unitary over the more

> pluralized and the transcendent over the immanent. . . . And what more do we need to say when the Oracles in relation to the gods themselves who are prior to that intelligible-intellectual order have pronounced the following words: **To the intellectual thunderbolts of the Intellectual Fire/All things yield, being subject to the persuading will of the Father.**

The 'secondary order', namely the intelligible-intellectual one, is for Proclus also organized hierarchically, just like the intelligible dimension. To find further proofs of this conception, Proclus quotes fragment 81 des Places according to which all beings are subject to the 'Intellectual Fire' (πυρὶ νοερῷ) and, through this, to the 'persuading will of the Father' (πατρὸς πειθηνίδι βουλῇ). Since the Demiurge has an intellectual nature, the 'Intellectual Fire' should be equated to Him, who would then govern all things through His 'intellectual thunderbolts'.[53] It seems that here Proclus contradicts himself since he places the Demiurge, who has an intellectual nature, above the intelligible-intellectual dimension, which for him is superior to the Demiurge. A possible explanation of this could be that Proclus was aware that for the *Chaldean Oracles* the Demiurge was not confined to the intellectual sphere but performed a mediating function between the intelligible world of the Father's Intellect on the one hand and both the intellectual and sensible dimensions on the other, being then closer to what for him was the intelligible-intellectual dimension than in his own system. This interpretation is based on fragment 37, 4–5 des Places, where the 'Intellectual Fire' (πὺρ νοηρός) separates the Ideas emanated from the Father's Intellect the one from the other, so that they can perform the role of intellectual archetype of the sensible world.[54]

Let us also focus on the Father's will. This faculty of the Father is mentioned by other two fragments, preserved by Michael Psellus.[55] In the first (fr. 77 des Places), it is said that the Father's will makes the Ideas which He thinks of think in their turn; these are identified by Psellus with the Chaldean Iynges, a class of inferior divinities that cooperate with the Demiurge in the creation of the material world.[56] The second (fr. 107, 4–5 des Places) explains that the Father's will governs the movement of the sun. The attribution to the Father of a human faculty must not necessarily be regarded as 'in contradiction'[57] with the fragments that assert His unknowability and transcendence.[58] On the one hand, it must be considered that the *Chaldean Oracles* are a poetical composition revealed by the gods through their human representatives, not a philosophical treatise in the strict sense; this allows their authors to make use of poetic licence to give their readers a description of the Principles that takes into account the limitations of their human mentality. On the other hand, the authors of the *Oracles* do not find it necessary to detach their religious commitment from their philosophical approach, marked by their affiliation to Platonic philosophy, but the two dimensions coexist in them and are reflected in the oscillation between their use of a philosophical, clearly Platonic jargon and a religiously inspired one.

In this respect, it must also be considered that the sharp distinction between religion and philosophy is a product of modern thinking and as such alien to ancient mentality in general and to the authors of the Oracles in particular. The attribution of the human faculty of will to the Father can also be understood from the point of view of cataphatic theology, which tries to understand the unknowable Principle of everything by attributing to it to the highest degree the created perfections that have come into existence from it.[59] Finally, the absolute transcendence of the Father does not necessarily mean that He takes no interest in the world He has contributed to create; on the contrary, He governs His own creation[60] in a special way that is incomprehensible to humans and which can only be expressed metaphorically by making use of concepts such as 'will', 'persuasion',[61] 'goodness'[62] and so on.

2.1.7 The interpenetration of the intelligible and intellectual dimensions

Fragment 20 des Places = p. 11 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. III. 102, 1–10 Diehl; Damascius, *In Parm*. II. 137, 16, 20–21; 180, 57, 26–28 Ruelle)

> Now if Plato says that (the Demiurge/Zeus) contemplates the Living Being, Orpheus adds that, after being showed (how to do it) by Night, (He) 'rushed at' the Living Being and 'swallowed' (it); (this is so) because the intellectual Intellect is joined to the intelligible by what is both intelligible and intellectual. You must not say however that because of this the Demiurge looks to that which is external to Himself, for this is not what the law has established for Him, but that since He turned both to Himself and to the source of Ideas inside Him, he is linked with the monad of all types of formal orders. **For the Intellect does not subsist without the intelligible and the intelligible does not exsist separately from Intellect**, according to the Oracles.

Here Proclus intends to explain how the Living Being of Plato's *Timaeus* 30 C Burnet (namely the archetypical, intelligible, model of the sensible cosmos) is contemplated by the Demiurge.[63] For Proclus, the Platonic doctrine does not teach that the intelligible dimension is external to the Demiurge since He needs to contemplate the Living Being. Quite the contrary: the moment the Demiurge reverts upon Himself He sees the intelligible ideas within Himself and is led back to their source in the Platonic Living Being.[64] To elucidate his views Proclus quotes the Orphic fragment 82 [2] Kern,[65] where it is said that Zeus (whom Proclus identifies with the Demiurge), after being taught how to do so by Night, leapt upon the Orphic Phanes (emerged from the primordial egg and identified by Proclus with the Platonic Living Being) and devoured Him.[66] By doing so, the zeusian Demiurgic Intellect was joined to the intelligible dimension of the Living Being, which from now on would belong to Him as well. In Proclus' eyes, fragment 20 des Places further confirms his exegesis of Orphic doctrine, since it shows that

the Intellect and the intelligible do not exist separately from each other. This is so because for Proclus all is in all[67] but proportionately 'to its station and capacity' (Dodds trans.),[68] which means that the intelligible dimension is in Intellect intellectually, while Intellect is in the intelligible dimension in an intelligible way. By having recourse to this explanation, Proclus is then able to preserve the superiority of the intelligible dimension over the intellectual one and their mutual interpenetration at the same time. In conclusion, these fundamental points of Proclus' philosophy may well be grounded on his literal but correct exegesis of fragment 20 des Places, according to which the intelligible and intellectual dimensions interpenetrate without losing their specific individuality and position in the hierarchy of Being.

2.1.8 Hecate

Fr. 51 des Places = p. 28 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 201, 10–15 Kroll).

> It seems to me that the Oracles mention this light when, teaching about animation, (namely) the source of the souls that animates everything, they say:
>
> > **Near the hollow of the cartilage of (Hecate's) right hip**
> > **The mighty stream of the primal Soul gushes forth with abundance**
> > **Ensouling completely light fire ether worlds.**

The Platonic context of this Proclean passage is the myth of Er's journey into the afterworld narrated in book X of Plato's *Republic*.[69] Er reports that after being punished or rewarded for their past deeds, the human souls who must return to the material world come first to Ananke's spindle, which is sustained by a column of light crossing heaven and earth.[70] Here the souls choose their future lives, while Ananke's sisters, the three Moirai,[71] confirm the choice each one of them has made.[72] Proclus then quotes fragment 51 des Places to show that the *Chaldean Oracles* as well knew about this column of light, defining it as a 'light' (φάος) ensouled by the Primal Soul in turn emerged from Hecate's 'right hip'. Although Hecate is not explicitly mentioned in this fragment, we can assume that it refers to this goddess since her statutes depicted her with hollows on both hips.[73] Moreover the fact that fragment 52 des Places mentions Hecate's left hip explicitly seems to establish a probable connection with the 'right hip', source of the Primal Soul, described by fragment 51. The study of the historical development of the figure of Hecate has been accomplished by S. Iles Johnston in a book that has become a classic on this subject,[74] so that we refer interested readers to her contribution as well as to those of other scholars.[75] Here we will say a few words on Chaldean Hecate.

Although Iles Johnston's study is still a necessary reference book, one of its main theses, that is, Hecate's identification with the World Soul,[76] has recently been challenged by Iles Johnston herself, who now, following

Brisson[77] and van den Berg,[78] believes Hecate to have been placed by the *Chaldean Oracles* well above the World Soul, that is, at an intermediate level between the Primal Fire (the Father in His monadic aspect) and the Demiurge; this interpretation, with which we agree, is in line with the mediating function that fr. 6 des Places attributes to this goddess.[79] In particular, Hecate is placed at two stages of the Chaldean hierarchy of beings: 1) between the Father and the Demiurge; 2) below the Demiurge, between the intellectual gods and what for Proclus are the hypercosmic divinities. Iles Johnston also follows those scholars (Dillon and Majercik) who believe that this doubling of Hecate's figure must not necessarily be a Neo-Platonic innovation but a conception already established by the Oracles.[80] Higher Hecate could also be identified with the second member of the Chaldean triad, Power,[81] while lower Hecate is responsible for the creation of the Soul and it is to this one that fragment 51 des Places refers. This then teaches that once created, the Soul gives life to the worlds, starting from light[82] and then extending to the empyrean/fiery, ethereal and material dimensions. In passing we point out that the term ἐμπύριος (empyrean, literally 'inflamed'), though present in Proclus, does not appear in the Oracles, which use instead the adjective πύριος (inflamed).

Coming now to Proclus' interpretation of the column of light, it must be pointed out first that he proposes alternative interpretations of the empyrean and ethereal worlds. In his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, he does not mention light but identifies the fiery/empyrean dimension with the Platonic world of Ideas as this exists at the level of the intellectual Demiurge,[83] while the ethereal region is linked with the Soul. This explanation of the Chaldean worlds appears to be in contrast with the one he proposes in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*.[84] Here, abandoning the previous interpretation, which he had also reiterated in his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*,[85] he interprets fragment 51 des Places literally and defines light as body, placing it above the empyrean/fiery and ethereal worlds as the ultimate foundation of both, which then assume a material connotation incompatible with the intellectual and psychic ones they had been given in the *Timaeus* commentary. We can see here how Proclus' desire to stay as close as possible to the literal meaning of this oracular fragment causes him some problems when he tries to reconcile his exegetical choices with his philosophical positions.

In the extract of Proclus' lost treatise *On Place* preserved by Simplicius,[86] Proclus identifies light with place, since this, being pure expanse, is an immobile body and therefore as indivisible and immaterial as light. Place is then said to be animated by Soul[87] and represents the ultimate foundation of the empyrean, ethereal and material worlds,[88] just as he had said in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*.

2.1.8.1 Hecate and the Connectors

Fr. 32 des Places = p. 19 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 420, 11–16 Diehl.)

> The Living Being then is the third intelligible triad. Of [this triad] the Oracles say that it is '**a worker**' (that is) '**That which truly bestows life-bearing fire**', that it '**fills the life-producing womb of Hecate**' and **pours into the Connectors the strenght of the life-giving exceedingly all-powerful fire.**

The 'Living Being' (τὸ αὐτοζῷον) is described by Plato in *Timaeus* 30 C–D Burnet and represents the intelligible model on the basis of which the Demiurge creates the sensible world. In Proclus' system, this entity coincides with the third member of the third intelligible triad and performs the function of intelligible archetype of the material world.[89] Here Proclus wants to show that the *Chaldean Oracles* regarded it as the one who gives life to both Hecate and the Connectors (συνοχείς), a class of divinities on which we will say more later. The term αὐτοζῷον is never used in the extant Chaldean fragments (but they may have used it in the ones that are not extant) so that it is possible that in this case Proclus is bending the literal meaning of the oracular text to suit his philosophical needs, aiming at reconciling Platonism with other traditions, the Chaldean one in this specific case.

Since for both des Places[90] and Majercik[91] this fragment refers to the Father's Intellect, the implicit consequence of their position is that Proclus is here identifying the Platonic Living Being with the Father's Intellect, which like the former contains the intelligible archetypes of sensible beings as fr. 37 des Places also says (νοῦς πατρὸς ἐρροίζησε νοήσας ἀκμάδι βουλῇ παμμόρφους ἰδέας). However, this is not possible. As we have seen discussing the triad Father – Power – Intellect, Proclus places the Father's Intellect in the first intelligible triad, while he makes the Living Being coincide with the third member of the third intelligible triad, so that the two entities cannot be identified. Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility that he identifies the two entitites by mistake. Be things as they are, it is difficult to say to which Chaldean hypostasis Proclus is referring here. The fact that the fragment describes it as 'a worker' as well as superior to the Connectors (which are placed below Him in the Chaldean hierarchy of beings) could imply that it is to the Demiurge that the fragment is referring, given that in the *Chaldean Oracles* this seems to perform a much broader role than in Proclus' system.

Of course this is a mere hypothesis, but if it were correct it would be the Demiurge who fills both Hecate and the Connectors with life.[92] These (but the same thing could be said for Iynges[93] and Teletarchs)[94] are 'a class of noetic entities (= active Thoughts or Ideas of the Father)'; the 'specific function of the Connectors is to "conjoin the various parts of the Universe" and are identified by Proclus with the intelligible and intellectual triad'[95] (the same applies to Iynges and Teletarchs, which are identified by Proclus with the first and third intelligible – intellective triad respectively). H. Seng links the Connectors with Eros, considering them as an inferior manifestation of it[96] in light of the connective function Eros performs by keeping all elements of the cosmos together according to fragment 39 des Places.

2.1.8.2 Hecate and nature

Fr. 54 des Places = p. 29 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm*., III. 821, 1–7 Cousin. See also Proclus, *In rem p*., II. 150, 21 Kroll; id., *In Tim*. I. 11, 21; III. 271, 11 Diehl)

> For sure as Plato says (130 C 2 Burnet) we will not establish an Idea of fire, water and motion and deny an intellectual cause of Nature, which is their cause. The theologians have supposed the source of Nature to be the zoogonic goddess: '**On the back of the goddess boundless Nature is hanged**'.

Let us continue to analyze the Chaldean fragments concerning the goddess Hecate. The context of the current one is Proclus' conception according to which as there is the Idea of fire or water in the Demiurgic Intellect, so there must be in it the Idea of Nature. But as this Chaldean fragment explains, Nature does not derive directly from the Demiurge, because He creates it through the intermediation of Hecate, called by Proclus the 'zoogonic goddess'. Rightly Majercik[97] points out that Nature must not be identified with Hecate as Lewy wrongly thought[98] but regarded as an entity inferior to her.

2.1.8.3 Hecate's shining mane of hair

Fragment 55 des Places = p. 29 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p*., I. 137, 17–21 Kroll)

> It is not at all unknown that the goddess' mane of hair and the locks spreaded on every side and then drawn together are analogous to those of her mother: '**Her mane of hair is indeed seen in a bright bristling light**', says one of the gods.

Proclus links this fragment with the goddess Hera, but as H. Lewy pointed out it is to Hecate's hair that fragment 55 refers.[99] In this part of his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, Proclus introduces Hecate in the context of his discussion of the criticism Socrates[100] leveled against Homer for describing Zeus in a way unfit for a god, that is, overwhelmed to such an extent by Hera's beauty to have a clandestine intercourse with her against his own parents' will (*Ilias* 14, 295–296; 315–316 Allen).[101] Lewy does not explain why he thinks this oracular saying must be referred to Hecate; probably he was led to interpret it in this way by the fact that Hera is never mentioned in the extant Chaldean fragments. If then Lewy's interpretation is correct, Proclus would have identified Hecate with Hera probably regarding the latter as an inferior manifestation of the former, even if the evidence currently available does not allow us to establish the nature of this relationship with precision. Would Lewy's interpretation be acceptable to Proclus? We think the answer is yes. The reason for this, leaving out the obvious fact that both

goddesses are patrons of life, could be found in Proclus' explanation of fragment 55 des Places, where he shows that Hera represents an inferior image of her mother Rhea.[102] Now in Proclus' system Hera is mentioned among the sublunary gods, who are intellectual souls immanent in this world[103] whose function is to preserve and take forward the generative power of superior principles.[104] Rhea,[105] on the contrary, is, with Cronus and Zeus, one of the fontal and intellectual gods and as such well above the material dimension in which Hera finds herself. Rhea is said by Proclus to have the role of promoting the expansion of life,[106] a function that Hera performs at an inferior level. Based on the principle that all goddesses are different expressions of the principle of Life (second, and 'feminine' member of the first intelligible triad Being – Life – Intellect),[107] the fact that a lower female goddess like Hera can be the image of a superior one like Rhea demonstrates that Lewy's exegesis could be correct. The closeness of these two divinities could have allowed Proclus to describe the one in terms of the other without impairing their specific individuality and position in the hierarchy of beings.

2.1.8.4 Double-faced Hecate

Fragment 189 des Places = p. 30, n. 1 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. II. 130, 21–23 Diehl)

> [B]eing thus in the median position the Soul shows both extremes, and by this fact imitates its cause (Hecate) who is 'visible on both sides' and '**double-faced**'.

For Proclus,[108] the World Soul represents the image of the goddess Hecate from whom it has come into existence. This is so because as Hecate is 'visible on both sides' (ἀμφιφαὴς) and 'double-faced' (ἀμφιπρόσωπος),[109] so the World Soul mediates between the sensible and intelligible dimensions, 'looking' at both at the same time. But over and above her iconographic representation, in the Chaldean system Hecate connects the Father with the Demiurge,[110] so that there is no better archetype than this goddess for expressing the function the World Soul performs of both communicating the power of superior hypostases to inferior beings and leading the latter back to the former. In its extreme concision, Proclus' exegesis shows clearly and correctly the mediating function performed by Hecate and the Soul in the Chaldean system.

2.1.8.5 Hecate and the 'thoughts of the Father'

Fragment 38 des places = p. 24 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm*. 895, 7–13 Cousin)

> At all events when the Oracles have explained to us the Ideas that subsist primarily in that (*scil*. the Father's Intellect) (they) have called them

> 'paternal Ideas' as being creative intellections, by virtue of the fact that intellections and their objects (constitutes) a single hypostasis: '**These are the Ideas of the Father, after which my coiling fire . . .** '

A clear example of Hecate's mediating function between superior and inferior hypostases can be found in this fragment, where the thoughts of the Father (the paternal Intellect according to Proclus' exegesis)[111] are 'gone after' (μεθ' ἃς) by the 'coiling fire' (εἰλυμένον πῦρ) of, it has been generally assumed,[112] the goddess Hecate, who then communicates them to inferior beings.

2.1.9 The Demiurgic Intellect or dyad

Fragment 8 des Places = p. 14 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 101, 51, 27–30 Pasquali)

> Our soul knows dividedly the indivisible quality of the activity of the gods and its unitary quality manifoldly. This certainly happens in the case of the Demiurge the name of whom we describe discursively because He unfolds the intellectual Forms, calls up the intelligible Causes and directs them toward the creation of the universe. Even Parmenides characterizes this God by sameness and otherness (146 A Burnet), there are two jars beside him in the poem (*Il*. 24. 527 Allen) and both the most mystical tradition and the Oracles from the gods say that '**the dyad is placed beside him**'. And they add, **He has both powers: to possess the intelligible beings through Intellect/Yet (also) to bring perception to the regions of the world**.

In this part of his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*, Proclus deals with the reconstruction of the etymology of divine names and specifically with that of the name 'Zeus' (ibid. 99–104 Pasquali), whom he identifies with the Demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*.[113] Proclus' argument is difficult to follow,[114] and it is not important for us to analyze it in detail here since fragment 8 des Places has no bearing on etymology. We will focus instead on how Proclus makes use of it to elucidate his own concept of the Demiurge. We refer the reader to R. M. van den Berg's work on Proclus' *Cratylus* commentary for a description of the general context in which this passage is located.[115] Proclus introduces his argument by saying that the human soul, being far from the oneness of the One and close to the realm of multiplicity, has the tendency to conceive what is indivisible in a divided way and what is unitary in a manifold way and that it applies this approach also when it tries to understand the unitary nature of the Demiurge. The soul as Plato had also said[116] is incapable of understanding what the Demiurge is, so that it is forced to form an idea of Him through a discourse (οὗ καὶ τὸ ἓν ὄνομα ὡς λόγον προφέρομεν) that is obviously made up of multiple concatenated

arguments. Proclus further corroborates this point by saying that the soul understands the Demiurge's creative activity as a succession of temporal acts ('He unfolds the intellectual Forms, calls up the intelligible Causes and directs them toward the creation of the universe') that in reality happen all at the same time given that temporal succession is posterior to the Demiurge (and contemporary to the sensible universe).[117] Proclus explains that even Parmenides,[118] the philosopher of the oneness of Being, in the homonymous Platonic Dialogue (146 A–B Burnet) had been forced by the limitations of human discourse to describe the Demiurge by making use of a couple of opposites, that of Sameness and Otherness. Unfortunately, we do not possess that part of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* where he interprets *Parmenides* 146 A–B Burnet, since the extant text ends at 142 A Cousin.

Coming then to the inspired poetry of Homer, Proclus shows that like Parmenides, this poet had recourse to a couple of opposites, goodness and evil, to describe the Demiurge, since he wrote that two jars are always placed beside Zeus: one of them contains evils, the other blessings, and sometimes the god gives men a mixture of the two, other times more evils than blessings.[119] Finally, fragment 8 des Places confirms what the other ancient sources quoted had said, demonstrating the concordance existing between different traditions: by saying that 'the dyad is placed beside Him' (the Demiurge), the fragment shows that in Him oneness and duality coexist in a way that is impossible to describe rationally, so that the use of metaphors and symbols becomes necessary in this case. The same position was also advanced by Numenius in fragment 11 des Places,[120] where the Demiurge's unitary nature, though remaining such, is also said to be split in two as a result of the Demiurge's involvement with matter 'which is a dyad', so that one side of it is always turned towards the intelligible world, the other towards the sensible universe; this is very similar to what fragment 8 des Places also says, namely, 'He (*scil*. the Demiurge) has both powers: to possess the intelligible beings through Intellect/Yet [also] to bring perception to the regions of the world.'[121]

Proclus points out the dyadic dimension of the Demiurge in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic* as well,[122] saying that, 'among the intellective kings the dyad belongs above all to the Demiurge of the universe ("for the dyad is placed beside Him", says the Oracle [fr. 8, des Places]).' In the *Platonic Theology*,[123] Proclus does not mention the *Chaldean Oracles* explicitly calling their authors simply 'the theologians', but says that these 'have attributed to His (*scil*. the Demiurge's) essence a dyadic connotation and the power to generate'.

The association of the dyad with generation is not casual, since in a passage of his *Commentary on Plato's Republic* Proclus had said that 'the dyad is, for all beings, cause of procession' (προόδων γὰρ ἡ δυὰς αἰτία πᾶσιν).[124] In conclusion, it can be said that Proclus' interpretation of fragment 8 des Places is coherent with its original meaning concerning the nature both unitary and dyadic of the Demiurge.

2.1.10 The divine artisan

Fragment 33 des Places = p. 19 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 12, 18–19 Diehl)[125]

> The Demiurge's ability (to create) remains inside Him and is in fact Him; it is by virtue of this that the Oracles call Him '**skilled Craftsman**' and '**Crafter of the fiery cosmos**'.

Fragment 33 is quoted by Proclus to show that the *Chaldean Oracles* agree with him that the Demiurge's creative power is intrinsic to his essence and was not subsequently given to Him by Nature:[126] the Chaldean fragment calls the Demiurge 'skilled Cratfsman' and 'Crafter of the fiery cosmos', showing that the act of creating is the most authentic expression of the Demiurge's being.

According to the *Chaldean Oracles*, the creation process implied the separation of the Ideas from one another and their organization in hierarchical order by the Demiurge,[127] who must be identified with the νοερὸς πῦρ ('intellectual fire') that according to fragment 37, 4–5 des Places, divides (μερίζει) the Ideas and assigns them to their specific intellectual order (μοῖραι εἰς ἄλλας νοεράς). These, before being emanated from the Father's Intellect (fragment 37, 1–2 says that it 'thought multiformed Ideas' [νοήσας . . . παμμόρφους ἰδέας]), existed in it in what we can define as a state of undifferentiation (since otherwise the 'intellectual fire'/Demiurge would have had no need to separate them from one another). Once hierarchically organized by the Demiurge, the Ideas can form the intellectual archetype of the sensible world, namely the 'fiery cosmos' fragment 33 refers to. This reconstruction is based on interpreting the expression νοερὸς πῦρ as referring to the Demiurge since this has an intellectual nature (νοερά) and not as Majercik does to the intelligible dimension (νοητά).[128] Even from a philological point of view according to the Liddle – Scott – Jones, νοερός must be translated as 'intellectual'.

As we have already seen in discussing Proclus' exegesis of fragment 8, Proclus had a conception of the creation process very similar to the Chaldean since for him the Demiurge first 'unfolds the intellectual Forms, calls up the intelligible Causes', that is, disposes the Forms/Ideas into a harmonious whole hierarchically organized and then 'directs them toward the creation of the universe', which means that He makes use of them as intellectual archetypes of the sensible world He creates.[129] Damascius' testimony could also help us to further clarify the Chaldean conception of the Demiurge since in what he says about Him he appears to be heavily influenced by the *Chaldean Oracles*. In his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, he identifies the intellectual Demiurge with the archetypal model of the material world saying that 'Intellect is indeed the archetype of the cosmos' (παράδειγμα γὰρ ὁ νοῦς τοῦ κόσμου)[130] and that 'the gods have placed the Ideas in Him first' (καὶ οἱ θεοὶ τὰς ἰδέας ἐν αὐτῷ πρώτῳ ἀπέθεντο),[131] which is an exegesis of fragment 37 des Places. By quoting fragment 33 des Places, Damascius also defines

the Demiurge as 'the artisan of the fiery world' (νοῦς ἐστίν ὁ κόσμου τεχνίτης πυρίου)[132] and like Proclus identifies Him with Zeus saying that, 'On the one hand He contains in his Intellect the intelligible, on the other He communicates sensation to the worlds' (τῷ νῷ μὲν κατέχειν τὰ νοητά, αἴσθησιν δ' ἐπάγειν κόσμοις),[133] which is none other then a quotation of fragment 8 des Places.

2.1.11 Cronus and Rhea

Fragment 56 des Places = p. 20 and 30 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*. 143, 81, 1–10 Pasquali)

> The universal gods who are called intellectual – of whom the great Cronus is the Father (402 B 4 Burnet) – are specifically called fontal.
>
> **For implacable thunderbolts leap out of this god,**
>
> says the Oracle about Cronus (Or. Chald. 35.1 des Places). But concerning the life-bearing source Rhea, from whom all life – divine, intellectual, psychic, and encosmic – is produced, the Oracles speak thus:
>
> **Rhea, let me tell you, (you are) both source and stream of blessed intellectual entities:**
>
> **For (you) first of all received powers in (your) ineffable wombs**
> **And poured forward generation which runs upon everything.**

Fragment 187 des Places = (Proclus, *Th*. *pl*. V. 10, 33, 21–24–34, 1–2 Saffrey-Westernik)

> The theologians assert that **exemption from old age** concerns this order (*scil*. the intellectual one) as the Barbarians and Orpheus the theologian of the Greeks say, for Orpheus mystically points out that Cronus' hair is always black and never becomes grey (*Orphicorum Fragmenta* 130 Kern). I admire the divinely-inspired intellect of Plato, which reveals the same things concerning this god to those who follow his steps.

Des Places is not sure whether the expression 'for implacable thunderbolts leap out of this god' (quoted also by Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 266, 133, 3 Ruelle = testimony 35 des Places) refers to Cronus or to the ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα,[134] while Majercik is convinced it must be linked with the latter.[135] The uncertainty is enhanced by Damascius's testimony, which identifies Cronus with the Chaldean ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα.[136] Actually, the extant oracular fragments never mention the god Cronus, so Majercik's assumption could be correct. On the contrary, Proclus refers this expression to Cronus, one of the fontal or intellectual gods of his system, whom he also describes by using fr. 187 des Places as 'exempted from old age' (ἀγήρων) since this god transcends the world of becoming bound to the passage of time.

Concerning Rhea, she is for Proclus the life-bearing divinity (ζωογόνος πηγή) from which all kinds of life (divine, intellectual, spiritual and encosmic) derive.[137] As rightly said by Lewy,[138] Proclus identifies Hecate with Rhea, which reinforces our previous assumption that the same happened between Hecate and Hera, given the profound relationship that all these three goddesses have with the henad of Life. By regarding Rhea as the fontal source of, among others, intellectual entities, as well as a goddess that communicates the power she has received from superior gods to inferior ones, Proclus shows to be perfectly in line with the literal meaning of the fragment, which had certainly shaped his understanding of the intellectual triad Cronus – Rhea – Zeus.

2.1.12 Aion and time

Fragment 49 des Places = p. 27 and n. 1 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. III. 14, 3–10 Diehl)

> Eternity was regarded by the Oracles as '**father-begotten light**' since the unifying light surely shines upon everything:
>
> > **For [Aion] alone, copiously plucking the flower of intellect from the strength**
> > **of the Father can think of the Paternal Intellect <and> give**
> > **<Intellect> to all sources and principles and roll them about and keep them forever in a ceaseless circular motion.**

Fragment 185 des Places = p. 33 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. III, 36, 19–22; 55, 30–31 Diehl)

> [B]ut also concerning the invisible and transcendent (reality) the truer Sun measures all things by comparison with time since it is simply '**time of time**' according to the pronouncement of the gods about it.

Fragment 199 des Places (Proclus, *In Tim*., III. 20, 22–25 Diehl)

> But the Theurgists would not say such things since they doubtless say that He (Time) is a god and have given us the invocation through which it is possible to move this god to appear to us in person and they commemorate this god as 'older', 'younger', '**revolving in a circle**' and 'eternal'.

Timaeus 37 D Burnet, where Plato introduces the concept of the eternal nature of the Living Being of which this world is the moveable image,[139] gives Proclus the opportunity of presenting his own views concerning Eternity. This is said to be 'at the centre of the intelligible dimension'[140] and to belong to the second intelligible triad,[141] in which the Living Being, third

member of the third intelligible triad, participates.[142] Eternity, Proclus says, measures the nature of the Living Being and fills it with its infinite life,[143] thus making it become eternal.[144] He says:[145]

> But the second triad is proximate measure of all beings and is coordinated with those of them that are measured. There are also in it both Limit and Unlimitedness: Limit so far as it measures intelligibles but Unlimitedness so far as it is the cause of perpetuity and of what (is) always the same. According to the Oracle, Eternity is the cause of 'never failing' life, of unwearied power and resolute energy. Nevertheless, Eternity is more characterized by Unlimitedness [than by Limit] for it comprehends in itself infinite time. And Time indeed has Limit and Unlimitedness dividedly. Given the fact that it is continuous, it is (also) infinite but being in the 'now' it is bounded: for the 'now' is Limit. But Eternity establishes Limit and Unlimitedness in the same for it is a henad and a power and according to the One, it is Limit, while according to Power, Unlimitedness.

Eternity made up of Limit and Unlimitedness is regarded by Proclus as both measure of all things, in particular of intelligible beings, and source of their life, which it gives to them 'never failingly' as fragment 49, 1 des Places points out. Compared with Time, Eternity possesses Limit and Unlimitedness in a unified manner, while Time in a divided one.[146]

These few considerations are sufficient to introduce the concept of Eternity in Proclus' philosophy. But the main problem is to assess whether or not this is in harmony with Chaldean doctrine. To give an answer to this question is all but easy, given the fact that no extant Chaldean fragment mentions Eternity ('ὁ αἰὼν'or 'Aion') explicitly. Fragment 49 is traditionally[147] referred to it because of the Proclean context in which it was quoted, which, as we have seen, centres around the concept of Eternity.[148] However, H. Seng has recently questioned the attribution advanced by Proclus of the expression 'πατρογενὲς φάος' to Aion, saying that it can well refer to Hecate, who is called 'πατρογενὲς' by fragment 35 des Places. On the other hand, this scholar says that the adverb 'αἰεί' (ceaseless) could indeed refer to Aion.[149] Seng's remarks make us reconsider the absolute certainty with which Lewy defined Aion as 'the chief numen of the Theurgists'.[150]

Let us now compare Proclus' Eternity with the entity mentioned by fragment 49 des Places. This is described as Light begotten by the Father that helps the Ideas to come out of the undetermined and concentrated condition in which they are before being emanated by the Father's Intellect. By virtue of the intellectual power (the 'flower of Intellect') given to it by the Father, this entity can contemplate the Father's Intellect and communicate the intellectual nature to Sources and Principles, namely to the Ideas, thus preparing them for being cognized by the Demiurge (intellectual by definition); this will in turn make use of Sources as intellectual models for the sensible beings He will

create, of Principles to operate directly on matter by giving it a form.[151] The Proclean Eternity and the entity described by fragment 49 seem to be similar to each other since both perform a mediating function between superior and inferior beings (which, however, could also be said of other hypostases of the Proclean system, so that this comparison is no proof that the entity mentioned by fragment 49 des Places coincides with Proclus' Eternity). But, if an explicit mention of Eternity is absent from fragment 49 des Places, is there any implicit reference to it? We have seen that H. Seng believes that the adverb 'αἰεί' could refer to Aion, and the context in which it is used does indeed describe an entity that keeps Sources and Principles in eternal motion. Eternity seems also to be mentioned by fragment 185 des Places. Here we find the expression 'Time of time', which Proclus links with the sun insofar as this is measure of any other time existing in the material world. Some scholars[152] have however supposed that this expression was originally referred by the Oracles to Eternity, which is Time's archetypal model as 'Time of time'. In conclusion, there is no decisive proof that the god Aion belonged to the Chaldean pantheon, though this seems to be probable.[153]

With regard to Time as it is described by Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* where he quotes fragment 199 des Places, this is not a simple measure of motion or even worse a cause of corruption for finite beings, but a personal god whom theurgists describe as both old and young, moving with a spiral movement and endowed with an 'eternal' nature.[154] As D. Balztly rightly remarks,[155] this shows that for Proclus, Time participates in Eternity and is therefore different from it. However, there is no agreement among scholars whether these two entities are the same or different.[156] On our part, we side with the second alternative, since in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* III. 20, 22–25 Diehl, Proclus links the idea that Time represents an independent divinity endowed with a personal nature (to the point that it can be invoked) with the position of the 'theurgists', which could be a reference to those theurgists who authored the *Chaldean Oracles*.

2.1.12.1 The inaccessible recesses of thought

Fragment 178 des Places (Proclus, *In Tim*. III, 14, 11–15 Diehl)

> Since it (*scil*. Aion) is saturated with paternal divinity, which (the Oracles) call the 'flower of intellect', by turning by love around the first principle of all things and acting (accordingly), it makes the Intellect and (its) unchanging thinking shine upon all things. But these are matters that I explicate '**in the inaccessible recesses of thought**.'

According to Majercik and other scholars,[157] this fragment, which des Places *contra* Kroll believed to be authentic, is not such since the word

'ἄβατος' ('inaccessible') is not specifically Chaldean but belongs to Neo-Platonic vocabulary. The Proclean context of this oracular saying further expands on Aion's function of communicating the intellectual power of the Father's Intellect to inferior beings, which thing it does after receiving the 'flower of intellect' from the Father according to both this fragment and fragment 49 des Places. Aion is filled to such an extent with 'paternal divinity' (πατρικῆς θεότητος) that it communicates what it has received from the Father to inferior beings. Aion's loving relationship with the beings it illuminates paves the way to the hypostasis that will be the object of the next paragraph, Eros.

2.1.13 Eros

Fragment 39 des Places = p. 25 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 54, 1–15 Diehl)

> And even prior to the intellectual essence, the single divinity of the universe and all the gods having divided by lot the cosmos begin (their creative activity) with what is unitary in it first. And even prior to the many, the one Demiurge. And this greatest and most perfect bond of union which the Father puts all around the cosmos as productive of friendship and of harmonious association of the beings (that are) in it the Oracles have called **'the bond of Eros, laden with fire',** as the Chaldean Oracles say.
>
> > **For after He thought His works, the self-generated paternal Intellect sowed into all things the bond of Eros, laden with fire/**
>
> And the reason they give for this is:
>
> > **In order that the All might continue to love for an unlimited time and the things created by the intellectual light of the Father might not fall down. It is thanks to Eros that the elements of the world continue to come and go.**

Fragment 42 des Places = p. 25 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm.* 769, 1–15 Cousin)

> Consequently, he admires he who can show how the intelligible Ideas can be both unified and divided and how, by virtue of unification, they do not lose neither their unmixed purity nor their divine communion because of separation but are both distinguished and brought into combination simultaneously by the bond of '**that admirable god, Eros,**' '**who**' according to the Oracle:
>
> > **Leapt out of Intellect first,**
> > **His unifying fire filled with fire to mix the fontal craters,**
> > **directing towards them the flower of his fire.**

The context of fragment 39 des Places is Plato's *Timaeus* 32 B–C Burnet where the four elements of which the world is constituted are said to have a reciprocal friendship (φιλίαν τε ἔσχεν ἐκ τούτων) that keep both them and the world together. Proclus starts discussing where this cosmic friendship comes from, and, after having identified several sources of it (proportion, Nature, World Soul, World Intellect), points to the Demiurge as He who established the bond of Eros by virtue of which all things are linked harmoniously to each other.[158] According to Proclus' exegesis then the Demiurge (the Second Intellect in the Chaldean system) originates (προκατάρχεται) Eros. One could ask whether Proclus' exegesis is correct. We think it is not, since the fragment makes explicit mention of the 'paternal Intellect' (πατρὸς νοεροῦ), not of the Second Intellect as the originator of Eros. Of the same view are the other interpreters who have commented this passage.[159] Unless Proclus gives for granted that the Demiurge makes use of the binding power of Eros after this has already been generated by the Father's Intellect. According to fragment 42 des Places, Eros mixes together the Sources, which, as we have seen earlier, are the Ideas of the Father's Intellect. It is important to point out that this puts Eros in a position very similar to that which fragment 49 des Places assigns to Aion, who is said 'to roll them about (*scil*. the Sources) and keep them forever in a ceaseless circular motion.' But a similar role is also performed by the Demiurge, who, according to fragment 37 des Places, separates the Ideas one from another and organizes them hierarchically to establish the fiery world/intellectual archetype of this cosmos.

The fact that Eros, Aion and the Demiurge perform very similar functions could be explained by pointing out that in the *Chaldean Oracles* their roles were not as precisely defined as in Proclus' system, so that they tend to overlap in ways that are all but easy to explain.

2.1.14 The hypercosmic paternal Abyss as divine nourishment of intellectual hypostases

Fragment 16 des Places = p. 16 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*. 110, 63, 19–21 Pasquali)

> And Socrates (interprets) Uranus by (making reference to) the fact that he 'observes the beings above' (396 B–C Burnet), that is, the supercelestial region and what is encompassed by the '**God-nourishing silence of the Fathers**'.

Fragment 17 des Places = p. 19, n. 1 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. I. 18, 25–28 Diehl)

> **[A]nd that which is intelligible is food for what contemplates it** according to the Oracle. This is so because giving feasts in return (is appropriate) primarily to the gods, and among men those who are wiser imitate

> the gods in this (as well) (since) they generously give to each other a share of their own intellections.

Fragment 18 des Places = p. 18 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*.,107, 57, 26–30 Pasquali; Damascius, *In Parm*., II. 137, 16, 6 Ruelle [ὑπὲρ κόσμον] and 189, 65, 16 [ὑπέρκοσμον])

> For all intellectual gods cling to the intelligible ones and are linked with them through their intellections: **You who by contemplating (it) know the hypercosmic paternal Abyss**, says the hymn to them.

For the *Chaldean Oracles*, the Demiurge is the culmination of the intellectual world, which also includes intellectual beings that help Him to shape the sensible world based on its intellectual archetype; among them are 'Sources' and 'Principles'. Now the discussion will focus more particularly on the relationship of these entities with the intelligible dimension and its summit, the paternal Abyss. Proclus identifies the 'Fathers' of fragment 16 des Places with the hyperuranion of *Phaedru*s 247 B–C Burnet (and implicitly with the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect) contemplated by the god Uranus, who belongs to the intelligible-intellectual dimension.[160] Modern interpreters have proposed various interpretations of these 'Fathers': des Places hints at the possibility that they could be either as in Proclus' interpretation the members of the first Chaldean triad (the first intelligible triad) or Sources and Principles;[161] Majercik[162] regards them as either the First and Second Intellect or the Teletarchai, divinities that govern the three Chaldean worlds (empyrean, ethereal and material). Lewy's interpretation seems to follow Proclus' insofar as he identifies the Fathers with the intelligible dimension. This is said by fragment 17 to be 'nourishment for him who contemplates it', that is, for the noeric/intellectual entites. On our part we think that the identification of the Fathers with the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect advanced by Proclus is correct given the intelligible nature of these entities.

The concept of 'silence' present in fragment 16 leads us back to our discussion of fragment 175 (see earlier), while the idea of contemplation of the intelligible dimension as a form of 'divine nourishment' are for both des Places[163] and Majercik,[164] who follow Lewy,[165] a reference to *Phaedrus* 247 D 1 Burnet (θεοῦ διάνοια νῷ . . . τρεφομήνη). This Platonic passage was interpreted by Proclus in the sense that the intelligible dimension, including its summit represented by the 'hypercosmic paternal Abyss' or the Father in His monadic aspect, represents analogically the 'food' that nourishes the intellectual triads that contemplate it. Regarding the identification of the Father with the paternal Abyss mentioned by fragment 18, P. Hadot says that 'this paternal Abyss designates the Father Himself'.[166] A further confirmation of this could be found in the fact that other ancient authors[167] identify the Abyss with the Father.[168]

But, as Majercik rightly points out, the name 'abyss' could also be used in a different, negative sense, as a designation of chaotic matter; this author explains that the double meaning this word has in the Oracles can be explained by referring to Neo-Platonic (she quotes Plotinus, *Ennead* VI. 7 [38], 13, 3–4 Henry – Schwyzer) and Gnostic sources,[169] where matter is regarded as a sort of inverted image of the First Principle: while this is infinite, indefinite, unlimited, unknowable etc. because it transcends everything finite and determined, matter possesses the same characteristics because it is unable to reach the finite dimension but always remains below it.

2.1.15 The Demiurge and the Iynges

Fragment 87 Des Places = p. 43 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.*, 52, 20, 25–30 Pasquali)

> The assimilative activity of the demiurgic Intellect is two-fold (389 A Burnet): the one by which (it) establishes the whole cosmos by contemplating the intelligible model; the other by which (it) gives appropriate names to each (being). Timaeus briefly explained these matters (36 C) but the theurgists and the pronouncements of the gods themselves teach us more clearly:
>
> > **But with unresting whirl the holy name also**
> > **leapt into the worlds as a result of the swift order of the Father.**

As it is clear from his commentary of this fragment, Proclus refers the 'holy name' (ὄνομα σεμνὸν) of verse 1 to the Demiurge, who makes use of the Ideas emanated from the Father's Intellect to create the material world by giving the beings it contains 'a name', that is, a form based on their intellectual archetypes.[170] Lewy,[171] however, identifies the 'holy name' with the Iynges,[172] whom he defines as 'Powers of the Father',[173] who 'swiftly hasten forth from the Father and back towards him' and as 'ferrymen, i.e. transmittors (sic) of messages[174]'. The limit of Lewy's interpretation, followed by des Places and Majercik,[175] lies in the fact that neither this fragment nor the Proclean context in which it is quoted mentions the Iynges explicitly. In addition to this it must be pointed out that in his *Cratylus* Commentary,[176] Proclus links the second verse of fragment 87 with the Teletarchs, not the Iynges (τοιοῦτον καὶ τὸ τελεταρχικόν, ὅ, φησί τις θεῶν (or. chald. p. 43) κόσμοις ἐνθρῴσκειν κραιπνὴν διὰ πατρὸς ἐνιπήν), so that it cannot be ruled out that Proclus is here referring to the Teletarchs as well.

With regard to the Iynges, Damascius points out that they were three in number[177] (one, we can assume, for each of the three Chaldean worlds [empyrean, ethereal and material]). He proposes two different etymologies of the term ἴυγξ (iunx): either the name comes from the top used in theurgic rites, which had the same name and could both invoke the gods and release

them according to the direction in which the user made it spin or from the verb ὔζειν meaning 'to shout', which describes the sound made by the ὕγξ during its rotatory movement.[178] Damascius explains that the Iynges belong to the intelligible-intellectual dimension,[179] as does Michael Psellus.[180] Psellus was probably influenced by Proclus, who in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* does not name the Iynges explicitly but describes an unspecified order of beings that mediates between the intelligible and material dimension with the adjective διαπόρθμιος or 'mediating', which in his *Cratylus* Commentary (71, 33, 15 Pasquali) he had explicitly referred to as the Iynges. This adjective also appears in fragment 78 des Places (quoted by Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 339, 201, 3–4 Ruelle during his description of the hyper-cosmic order) and is referred by both des Places and Majercik to the Iynges.[181]

2.1.16 The Connectors

Fragment 80 des Places = p. 41 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm*. 941, 11–15; 29–30 Cousin. Damascius, *In Parm*., II. 182, 60, 2; 205, 87, 24 Ruelle)

> For which reason in the secondary orders as well the more universal rules over the more particular, and the more unitary over the more pluralized, and the transcendent over the immanent. . . . And what more do we need to say when the Oracles in relation to the gods themselves who are prior to that intelligible – intellectual order have said the following words . . . and again **But also everything that serves the material Connectors.**

Fragment 151 des Places = p. 58 Kroll (Proclus, *In Eucl*., 129, 6–10 Friedlein[182])

> Hence the Oracles call the angular conjunctions of figures '**bonds**' because (they) are images of unities that create continuity as well as of the unity of the gods by which things separated are joined together.

Fragment 152 des Places = p. 19 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 107, 59, 1–2 Pasquali)

> For he is, as the oracle says, '**unfragmented**', uniform, undivided and 'Connector of all founts', who causes them all to return back to himself, unifies them and is separate from them all undefiledly.

Fragment 84 Des Places = p. 42 Kroll (Proclus, *Theol. Plat*. IV. 21, 64, 8–16 Saffrey – Westernik)

> He calls the back of the heaven summit of the celestial order and beyond, which things pertain remarkably to the first of the Connectors.

> **For by connectedly containing all things** in the summit of his own hyparxis, according to the Oracle, **he wholly exists beyond** and is united to the supercelestial place and to its ineffable power, being enclosed on all sides by it and shutting himself in the uniform intellection of the intelligibles.

Fragment 207 des Places = p. 19 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 107, 59, 3 Pasquali; Damascius, *In Parm*., II, 148, 12 Ruelle)

> For he is, as the Oracle says, 'unfragmented', uniform, undivided and '**Connector** of all founts', who causes them all to return back to himself, unifies them and is separate from them all undefiledly.

Here Proclus comments on the Chaldean Connectors, which we have already met in discussing the goddess Hecate. Apart from the passages of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus* where fragment 152 and 207 des Places are quoted, in which the god Cronus is numbered among the Connectors, the other passages listed previously are less clear concerning the identity of these entities: on the one hand, they rule over the beings that are under their lordship (material beings in the case of fragment 80 des Places), and, Damascius seems to confirms this,[183] the Oracles placed a Connector for each of the three worlds (empyrean, ethereal and material) of their cosmology;[184] on the other hand as in fragment 151 des Places, they are regarded as those who join all things together without impairing the specific identity of each being, in the same sense as angular conjunctions bind together different lines and planes. According to Damascius, they give order and measure to all beings that are below them.[185] The true identity of the Connectors is then difficult to define,[186] and scholars so far have been unable to establish their nature with precision.[187] Lewy[188] interprets fragment 84 des Places[189] as if it referred to the Supreme God of the Chaldean system regarded as the First Connector, but, if we take the Proclean context into account,[190] we can easily notice that Proclus refers the fragment to Uranus, the summit of the second intelligible and intellectual triad who is represented in the Platonic *Phaedrus*[191] as the 'heaven' whose 'back' or superior part is reached by those souls that have achieved the contemplation of the intelligible dimension, which for Plato is located above the heaven and therefore called 'hyperuranion' (ὑπερουράνιον τόπον, literally 'the place above the heaven').[192] Given that this god is never mentioned by the Oracles, it is impossible to establish whether Proclus' interpretation is correct, and the same could be said for Proclus' identification of Cronus with the Chaldean 'Connector of all founts' mentioned by fragment 152. Because of lack of information on the Connectors, we think that Proclus' identification of their leader with Uranus cannot so easily dismissed as Lewy seems to do, but, on the other hand, this is not a good reason to accept it unquestioningly. The fact that the Proclean context of fragment 84 links the Connectors with Uranus could

prove Brisson's[193] assumption according to which they were interpreted by Proclus as belonging to the intelligible-intellectual dimension. This scholar's position is in part based on Michael Psellus, who regards Iynges, Connectors and Teletarchs as belonging to the intelligible-intellectual sphere of Proclus' system[194] as Damascius also does, to whom Psellus could be indebted (τοῖς δὲ συνοχεῦσι τὸ νοητὸν καὶ νοερὸν καὶ ἡ πρώτη ζωή).[195] But, if Damascius' exegesis were correct, Proclus' identification of Cronus with the Connectors would be wrong, since this, who is simply intellectual, is inferior to them, who are intelligible-intellectual.

In conclusion, our information concerning the Connectors is so much influenced by Neo-Platonic exegesis that it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish the precise role these divinities played in the Chaldean system. The little information at our disposal that is not tainted by Proclean interpretation allows us to say that they performed a mediating function between higher and lower hypostases on the one hand and the three Chaldean worlds on the other in a way similar to Eros', though the Connectors seem to be placed at a lower level than this.[196]

2.1.17 The Teletarchs

Fragment 85 = p. 42 Kroll (Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* IV. 39, 111, 18–23 Saffrey – Westernik)

> Because the first having extremes governs like a charioteer **the wing of fire**. But the middle comprehending beginnings, ends and middles perfects ether, which is also itself triple. And the third, which comprehends according to one union the spherical, the rectilinear and the mixed figure perfects unfigured and formless matter: giving form to the inerratic sphere and the first matter, by the spherical; to the planetary sphere and to the second matter, by the mixed figure. For the spiral is there. And it gives form to the sublunary region, and the last matter by the rectilinear. For the motions according to a right line are in this region. (T. Taylor trans. with my corrections)[197]

Fragment 86 Des Places = p. 43 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 58, 3–10 Diehl)

> Unless it is maybe necessary to say this: that Plato has talked about the Soul in relation to the ethereal region but about the Intellect in relation to the empyrian one because (he) says that the Soul is a mixture of three parts (35 A 6, 37 A 4 Burnet) while the Intellect is indivisible. For the ethereal region is also threefold, and **the Ruler of Souls** who mounts on the ethereal (region) is **Ruler of Mysteries** (Teletarch). And the empyrian region is one as well as intellectual by virtue of its substance, as we have reported.

With the Teletarchs or 'Masters of Initiation'[198] (also called 'Masters of the World' [κοσμαγοί], 'Archic Fathers' [ἀρχικοὶ πατέρες] or simply 'Fathers'),[199]

the modern interpreter finds himself in the same situation as with the Connectors: it is almost impossible to detach the Neo-Platonic interpretation of them from the original meaning they had in the *Chaldean Oracles*. They have been placed by us after the Connectors because this is the position that fragment 177 des Places quoted by Damascius[200] gives them (οἱ μὲν τελετάρχαι τοῖς συνοχεῦσι συνείληνται) as also does Michael Psellus;[201] the reference to initiation contained in their very name must connect them with the Chaldaic initiation rituals, but we do not know how they precisely performed their role of master initiators. In his analysis of these entities, Lewy[202] recognizes three Teletarchs: the first, identified with Aion and ruler of the empyrean dimension, the second with the sun, who governs the ethereal region, the third equated to an unspecified 'Lord of the aery zone', of which nothing is known[203] and whom Lewy believes to be governor of the material world.[204]

If one however refers to ancient sources, there is no indication that the Oracles identified the First Teletarch with the god Aion: in the passage of his *Platonic Theology* where he quotes fragment 85 des Places, Proclus associates him with the fiery dimension (the empyrean world), giving him the function of governing the 'wing of fire', which other interpreters link with the Platonic 'wings' of the soul (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246 Burnet);[205] the role of the first Teletarch would then be that of leading the soul up to the divine world, while the second perfects the ethereal world of celestial bodies and the third does the same with regard to the material sphere.[206] Damascius adds that each of the Teletarchs creates in its turn three further triads.[207] This connection of the Teletarchs with the three Chaldean worlds seems to be confirmed by the Proclean context in which fragment 86 is quoted, which links the second Teletarch, who rules over the souls (ψυχοκράτωρ), with the ethereal region, as well as by Michael Psellus' testimony.[208] With regard to the first Teletarch, Lewy[209] interprets Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, III. 43, 10–20 Diehl in the sense that the god Time whom Proclus talks of in this passage is none other than the Chaldean Aion, who in turn must be considered as the leader of the Teletarchs. However, as R. Majercik rightly points out, this interpretation has been put into question[210] by E. R. Dodds,[211] who stresses the fact that Proclus distinguishes Time from Aion/Eternity (in this regard Majercik quotes Proclus, *Elements of Thelogy*, 53 Dodds).

As a consequence, the precise identity of the first Teletarch must be left open. As fragments 85 and 86 des Places clearly say, the second Teletarch governs the ethereal dimension, to which both the celestial bodies and the souls belong.[212] With regard to the third Teletarch, to which Lewy gives the title of 'Lord of the aery zone', little can be said apart from the fact that he was involved in the government of the material dimension, to which of course the element 'air' belongs. Some light is shed by Proclus in the passage of the *Platonic Theology* where fragment 85 is quoted;[213] Proclus says that the third Teletarch creates the fixed stars by shaping their matter according to the circular figure; the planets, by making use of the spiral; and sublunar beings, by having recourse to the straight line. According to Michael Italicus,[214] the

Teletarchs have also the function of establishing the division and differentiation that exist among beings, which is necessary to push forward the generative process of the cosmos. With regard to the origin of the Teletarchs, Damascius believes that they have come into existence from the Connectors, to whom they are subordinate[215] and belong like them to the intelligible-intellectual dimension.[216]

2.1.18 The World Soul

Fragment 53 des Places = p. 28 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 408, 12–17; II. 61, 24–25 Diehl)

> And in the same way the god-given theology says that the cosmos has been brought to completion by these three (elements). At all events the Soul says about the 'Twice Beyond' that has created the universe, **I, Soul, am situated next after the Thoughts of the Father/Ensouling all things with my heat**.

Fragment 95 des Places = p. 47, n. 1 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.* II. 143, 20–24 Kroll)

> [T]he Demiurge then having divided the same straight line of armonic numbers (that stood) by him thus making two (lines) joined (them) together in (their) middle points, in the same way in which it is said the (letter) X to be written, **placing** this symbol **in the heart of** souls, (that is), in their essence, (as) being proper to every soul.

Proclus explains the creation of the Soul by the Demiurge in clear Platonic terms, following what Plato said in *Timaeus* 36 B–D Burnet, that is, that the Demiurge divided the straight line into two, joined them together in the same way in which the Greek letter 'X' is written, and then placed this symbol in the very essence of the Soul, which fragment 95 des Places calls its 'heart' (καρδία).[217] This letter also symbolizes the mixture of Plato's circle of the Same with that of the Difference, the two primordial opposites from which the Soul was born.[218]

The context[219] in which fragment 53 des Places was quoted by Proclus goes in the direction of considering the Father whose thoughts the Soul contemplates as none other than the δὶς ἐπέκεινα of fragment 169 des Places, in turn identified with the Platonic Demiurge and with Zeus. Once created by the δὶς ἐπέκεινα, the Soul contemplates the intellectual Ideas that are present in Him and communicates them to the material dimension in the form of reason-principles or λὸγοι σπερματικοί, which shape the unformed matter accordingly.[220] Proclus' interpretation of this fragment was followed by subsequent exegetes of the Oracles like Michael Psellus,[221] and even modern interpreters like H. Seng[222] have accepted it.

We have now reached the bottom of the Chaldean divine hierarchy and come to the point where the divine world gives existence to the material world, an imperfect and always changing image of the eternal reality.

2.1.19 Ἄζωνοι and hyper-cosmic gods

Fragment 188 des Places = p. 46 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm*., 647, 5–8 Cousin; *in Tim*., III, 43, 12–14 Diehl)

> [W]hile another is the priestly style, which delivers the names of the gods according to their mysteric interpretation, such as those recited among the Assyrians to expound the orders of the gods: Zonai and **Azonoi**, Pegai, Ameiliktoi, Synocheis. . . .
>
> But those who practice theurgy are surely not subject to it (*scil*. to forgetfulness of divinity) since this is not allowed (to happen to) them. Rather, they praise Time himself as a god and (regard) one [time god] as 'connected with the zones', as we said, another as '**independent of the zones**', which measures the period of the third of the ethereal (regions).

Fragment 209 des Places = p. 32 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*., III. 83, 7–10 Diehl)

> [I]n the same way the Sun makes the visible universe bright through this undefiled light and that which illuminates is always superior to that which gets illuminated because neither is the Good intelligible, nor is Phanes intellectual, nor Zeus **hypercosmic**.

M. Tardieu has suggested that the words ἄζωνον/Ἄζωνοι did not belong to the *Chaldean Oracles* but to the prose works of Julian the Theurgist.[223] Majercik, however, disagrees with him, saying that 'inclusion of these terms (although methodologically problematic), does enhance our understanding of the Chaldean system as a whole'.[224] The matter is made even more complex by the fact that Proclus quotes the term 'ἄζωνον' only here. Nothing seems to prevent us from assuming that this expression was used both in the prose works of Julian the Theurgist and in the *Chaldean Oracles*. With regard to the plural form of the term ('ἄζονοι'), this is quoted by Proclus in the context of his discussion of the different ways in which theological truths can be discussed: according to poetic inspiration that can either make use of mythological imagery or not, by having recourse to mathematics, dialectically as in the case of Plato's philosophy and, finally, in the 'priestly style' (ἱερατικῶν) where the names of the gods reflect the esoteric doctrines of each religious group,[225] such as the Assyrian people, to whom the supposed authors of the *Chaldean Oracles* belonged. But what are 'Ζῶναι' and 'Ἄζωνοι'? According to Psellus, the Ζῶναι are the trajectories made by the planets during their revolutions,[226] while he defines the Ἄζωνοι as entities

inferior to the archangelic order[227] but superior to the Ζῶναι.[228] In his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Damascius also places the Ἄζωνοι after the archangels[229] and says they transcend the Ζῶναι and have the function of grouping them together.[230] He also says that they are three for each of the three worlds of Chaldean cosmology (empyrean/fiery, ethereal and material) and that they correspond to the Archic (ἀρχικοί) or Independent (ἀπολύτοι) gods.[231]

The Proclean passage where fragment 188 appears links Ἄζωνοι and Ζῶναι with Time (Χρόνος). Proclus distinguishes between a god of time connected with the Ζῶναι and another with the Ἄζωνοι and attributes to the latter the government of the third ethereal world of Chaldean cosmology. Beyond these Proclus places the archangels who for him are superior to the Ἄζωνοι and rule over the second ethereal world. He then mentions a 'Commanding' (ἀρχικός) time that governs the first of the ethereal regions (which should coincide with the hyper-cosmic gods called ἀρχικοί ('Archic') by Proclus)[232] in turn preceded by a fontal (πεγαῖος) god that exerts his lordship over the empyrean or intellectual cosmos[233] and who should be identified with the Demiurge for the following reasons: He is numbered among the fontal gods because, like them, He belongs to the intellectual dimension;[234] He is said to be born from 'the fontal goddess who generates all life and motion', that is, Rhea.

Fragment 209 is made up of the single word 'hyper-cosmic' (ὑπερκόσμιος), which is quoted in a context where this adjective is denied of Zeus the Demiurge since he belongs to the intellectual, not the hyper-cosmic, order. In Proclus' philosophy, the hyper-cosmic gods transcend the encosmic dimension but are involved in its government at the same time.[235] Damascius calls the hyper-cosmic gods 'ἀπολύτοι' or 'independent' from any relationship with matter and identifies them with the Chaldean Ἄζωνοι (διὸ καὶ 'ἄζωνοι' κέκληνται πρὸς αὐτῶν τῶν θεῶν); they belong to the order of Cronus, since this god, differently from Zeus the Demiurge, exerts his lordship over the material world while remaining 'independent' from any relationship with it.[236] In Proclus' extant works we have found no trace of such an identification. Finally, Damascius disagrees with Proclus since, while he identifies the Ἀπολύτοι with the hyper-cosmic gods,[237] Proclus thinks they belong to the hyper-cosmic–encosmic dimension.[238]

Notes

1 Although the term ὑπόστᾶσις or 'substantial nature' is never used in the Oracles, we believe it describes well the nature of each entity of the Chaldean divine hierarchy; for this reason we have decided to use it, cautioning the reader that it is used for its explanatory value only.
2 Plato, *Timaeus*, 30D Burnet.
3 Ibid.
4 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, I. 22, 101, 1–3 Saffrey–Westernik. See also ibid., 22–24, 101–109; III. 22, 78, 15–81, 20 Saffrey–Westernik.

5 See Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 13, 17 Dodds (τὸ ἁπλῶς ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἁπλῶς ἓν ταὐτόν); Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, II. 6, 40, 1–43, 10 Saffrey–Westernik. See also Dodd's commentary on this proposition (ibid., 199) where he points out that the identification of the One with the Good dated back to Plato's unwritten doctrines. This identification is also present in Numenius: see id., *Fragmenta*, 19, 12–13 des Places (οὕτω τοι ὁ Πλάτων ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ τῷ ὀξὺ βλέποντι ἀπέδοκε τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἕν).

6 It is interesting to point out that R. Majercik, who denies the existence of triads in the Chaldean system and identifies the Chaldean First God with Numenius' First Intellect in her commentary on fragment 11 des Places (id., *The Chaldean Oracles*, 147), declares the following: 'If Westernik's reconstruction of this line is correct, then the *Oracles* characterized the Highest God as Good as well, perhaps as One'.

7 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 115, 67, 9 Pasquali.

8 On the ineffability of the One in Proclus, see a list of relevant Proclean passages (mostly from books I, IV and VII of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*) in D. Carabine, *The Unknown God* (1995), 160–187, 165–171. See also C. Guérard, Le danger du néant et la négation selon Proclus: *Revue Philosophique de Louvain. Quatrième série* 59 (83) (1985) 331–354.

9 Hesiod, *Theogonia*, M. L. West ed. (Oxford, 1966), 116.

10 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 115, 9–13 Pasquali.

11 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 77 and note 38. See also 328 and note 59 (with a brief description of the usage of this term in various late antique traditions)

12 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 211.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 213.

15 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 306 and note 4.

16 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, I. 324, 14–28–325, 1–3 Diehl.

17 O. Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin, 1922), pars prior, 56, 58, 60, 76, 87 Diehl.

18 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 213.

19 J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, V (Rome–Paris, 1888), 192–195. See also A. Jahn, *Ecoglae e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica* (Halle, 1891), 1–5.

20 On this, see É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 203.

21 J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, V. 194, 5–10 = É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, IV. 209, 5–10.

22 J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, V. 194, 15 = É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, IV. 210, 20–22. On this topic, des Places (id., *Oracula chaldaica*, 211 and note 1) refers to L. J. Rosán, *The Philosophy of Proclus* (New York, 1949), 216 and note 160. On the flower of the soul, see these two fundamental studies, C. Guérard, *L'hyparxis de l'âme et la fleure de l'intellect dans la mystagogie de Proclus*, in Saffrey–Pépin, *Proclus lecteur et interprète des anciennnes* (1987), 284–297. J. Dillon, *The One of the Soul and the Flower of the Intellect: Models of Hyper-Intellection in Later Neoplatonism*, in J. Dillon–M.-É. Zovko eds., *Platonism and Forms of Intelligence* (Berlin, 2008), 247–258. A good introduction to Neo-Platonic psychology can be found in C. Helmig, *Iamblichus, Proclus and Philoponus on Parts, Capacities and ousiai of the Soul and the Notion of Life*, in K. Corcilius–D. Perler, *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz* (Berlin–Boston, 2014), 149–177. A still useful classic on this topic is H. Dörrie, La doctrine de l'âme dans le néoplatonisme de Plotin à Proclus: *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 2 (23) (1973) 116–134. On Proclus' psychology in particular see J. F. Finamore–E. Kutash, *Proclus on the Psyche, World Soul and Individual Soul*, in d' Hoine–Martijn, *All from One*

(2017), 122–138. D. G. MacIsaac, The *Nous* of the partial Soul (2011), 29–60. J. Trouillard, *L'une et l'âme selon Proclus* (1972), 27–67, 111–131, 133–154. Id., *La mystagogie de Proclus* (Paris, 1982), 207–221. Id., Âme et creation selon Proclus: *Les Études Philosophiques* 3 (12) (1957) 430–433. Id., Âme et esprit selon Proclus: *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* (5) (1959) 1–12. Perkams–Piccione, *Proklos: Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik* (2006), 117–255. C. Steel, *Breathing Thought: Proclus on the Innate Knowledge of the Soul*, in J. J. Cleary ed., *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism* (Leuven, 1997), 293–307.

23 Ibid., V. 195, 5 = É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, IV. 211, 1–4.

24 Ibid., V. 195, 10–15 = É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, IV. 211, 4–15.

25 See later Chapter 5.

26 *Oracula chaldaica*, fr. 110 des Places = Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, D. J. O'Meara ed., vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1989), 131, 5, 18–21.

27 Ibid., 226, note to page 210.

28 In Valentinian Gnosticism, Silence is not equivalent to the First Principle but is one of the hypostases emanated from it: see Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, I. 1–2, 1; I. 1, 13, 6 Hervey; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, VI. 29, 3–4 Wendland. On the relationship between Chaldean Oracles and Valentinian Gnosticism, see M. Tardieu, *La Gnose Valentinienne et les Oracles Chaldaïques*, in Layton, *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (1983), 214–215; on Valentinianism in general see also now C. Markschies–E. Thomassen, *Valentinianism: New Studies* (Leiden, 2019). We also refer the interested reader to the following fundamental studies on Gnosticism: U. Bianchi–M. Krause–J. M. Robinson–G. Videngren eds., *Gnosis–Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (Göttingen, 1978). W. Bousset, *Hauptproblem der Gnosis* (Göttingen, 1907; repr. 1973/2011). E. Buonaiuti, *Lo gnosticismo* (Roma, 1907). K. Corrigan–T. Rasimus eds., *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of John D. Turner* (Leiden–Boston, 2013). H. Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist, Erstert Teil: Die mytologische Gnosis* (Göttingen, 1978). Id., *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston, MA, 1958). P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, M. D. Johnston ed.–M. Steinhauser trans. (Minneapolis, 2003). J. van Oort ed., *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica: Collected Essays of Gilles Quispel* (Leiden–Boston, 2008). P. K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, R. G. MacLachlan Wilson trans. (San Fransisco, 1987). G. Sfameni Gasparro, *La conoscenza che salva*– Lo gnosticismo: temi e problemi (Soveria Mannelli, 2012). G. D. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden, 1984). J. D. Turner–R. Majercik, *Gnosticism and Later Platonism* (Atlanta, 2000). R. van den Broek, *Gnostic Religion in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2013). M. A. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, 1996). H.-Ch. Puech, *Enquête de la gnose* (Paris, 1978). See also now G. W. Tromf, in collaboration with G. B. Mikkelsen and J. Johnston, *The Gnostic World* (Abingdon, Oxon–New York, NY, 2019).

29 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 34, 125, 1–2 Saffrey–Westernik.

30 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 107, 63, 59, 5 Pasquali.

31 *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 1171, 4–10 Cousin.

32 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 7, 30, 7–8; II. 11, 65, 13 Saffrey–Westernik. See also Proclus, *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, 56, 5–15 Westernik.

33 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 112 and note 181.

34 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 295 and note 1. But see also W. Theiler, *Die chaldäischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesios* (Halle, 1942), 15–16.

35 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 207.

36 On this, see H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 238–240. Michela Zago, *"Non cambiare mai i nomi barbari" (Oracoli Caldaici, fr. 150 des Places)*, in H. Seng–M. Tardieu eds., *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel–Kontext, Interpetation, Rezeption* (Heidelberg, 2010), 109–143. H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 115–119. C. Addey, *Assuming the Mantle of the Gods: 'Unknowable Names' and Invocations in Late Antique Theurgic Ritual*, in A. P. M. H. Lardinois–J. H. Blok–M. G. M. van Der Poel eds., *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion* (Leiden–Boston, 2011), 279–294. P. Cox Miller, *In Praise of Nonsense*, in A. H. Armstrong ed., *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman* (New York, 1986), 481–505. A. Uždavinys, Metaphysical Symbols and Their Function in Theurgy: *Eye of the Heart: A Journal of Traditional Wisdom* (2) (2008) 37–59. C. van Liefferinge, *La Théurgie des Oracles Chaldaïques à Proclus* (Liège, 1999), 147–148. I. Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity: The Invention of a Ritual Tradition* (Gottingen–Bristol, CT, USA, 2013), 237–242.

37 On Cronus in Proclus, see L. Brisson, La figure du Kronos orphique chez Proclus–De l'orphisme au néo-platonisme, sur l'origine de l'être humain: *Revue de l'historie des religions* 4 (219) (2002) 435–458; id., *Proclus et l'orphisme*, in id., *Orphée et l'orphismes dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine* (Aldershot, 1995), 60–61; id., *Proclus et l'orphisme*, in Saffrey–Pépin, *Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens* (1987), 58–118. See also A. Bernabé, *The Gods in Ancient Orphism*, in J. Bremmer–A. Erskine eds., *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations* (Edinburgh, 2010), 425. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1993), 69–147.

38 *Orphicorum Fragmenta*, pars posterior fr. 68 Kern.

39 See also Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 415, 27–416, 2 Diehl.

40 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 205.

41 Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 60 Klibansky–Labowsky.

42 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 149, 16–17 O' Meara, where he identifies ἄπαξ ἐπέκεινα with the Paternal Intellect and 22–23, where the δὶς ἐπέκεινα is identified with the Demiurge.

43 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 9 and note 13; 77 and note 43.

44 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 205.

45 Lydus, *Liber de mensibus*, R. Wünsch ed. (Leipzig, 1898), IV. 53, 31–35.

46 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 264–265; 293 and note 3.

47 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 160, 43, 27–28 Ruelle.

48 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 52.

49 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 281, 152, 22–24; 282, 154, 17–20 Ruelle.

50 Ibid., II. 161, 45, 8–10 Ruelle.

51 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 47–52. See also id., ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα und δὶς ἐπέκεινα, in A. Lecerf–L. Saudelli–H. Seng eds., *Oracles Chaldaïques: fragments et philosophie* (Heidelberg, 2014), 31–46.

52 Ibid., 52.

53 A reference, according to Majercik, to the Connectors, a class of inferior divine beings with which we will deal later: id., *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 173. Of the same idea is also H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 131–132 and note 247.

54 Majercik (ibid., 173) agrees with our interpretation since she refers 'πυρὸς νοεροῦ' of this fragment to the 'νοερῷ πυρὶ' of fragment 37, 4 des Places.

55 Frgs. 77, 2; 107, 4 des Places. It must also be considered fr. 37, 1 des Places, where it is the will of the Father's Intellect to be mentioned, not of the Father.

56 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 145, 24–25 O' Meara (where he quotes

fragment 77 des Places adding the scholion 'αἱ ἴυγγες' to identify these with the Father's Ideas). See also ibid., 26–29 where he explains the identification of the ἴυγγες with the Father's thoughts and ibid., 149, 6–13 on the function performed by the ἴυγγες and other inferior Chaldean divinities. On the ἴυγγες as thoughts/Ideas of the Father, see H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 132–137. H. Seng, Ἴυγγες, συνοχεῖς, τελετάρχαι in den *Chaldaeischen Orakeln*, in L. G. Soares Santoprete–C. O. Tommasi eds., *Formen und Nebenformen des Platonismus in der Spätantike* (Heidelberg, 2016), 293–316.

57 L. Brisson, *La commentaire come prière*, in Goulet-Cazé, *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation* (2000), 334.

58 See fr. 1, 1–3; 3; 18; 77; 108; 116; 191 des Places.

59 This oscillation between cataphatic and apophatic language is present in Proclus as well; in this regard D. Jugrin rightly says: 'Although it shows how far the human discourse falls from the One, there is at Proclus a continuous tension between the "vague terminology", derived from the realm of existence – which we are forced to invoke when we refer to the One – and the validity of this language. This tension cannot be grasped especially in the context of the process of *naming* – a topic which is extremely important for understanding the subsequent negative theology'. See id., Knowing the Ineffable One: The Mystical Philosophy of Proclus: *Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in the Humanities* 2 (22) (2017) 26. On apophaticism in Proclus see also D. Carabine, *The Unknown God* (1995), 160–187. C. Guérard, Le danger du néant (1985), 331–354.

60 *Oracula chaldaica*, frgs. 7, 13, 57, 74 des Places.

61 Ibid., 14 des Places.

62 Ibid., 15 des Places.

63 Plato, *Timaeus*, 39 E 7–9 Burnet.

64 On this, see L. Brisson, *Proclus et l'orphisme*, in id., *Orphée et l'orphismes* (1995), 72–73; 76–79 = *Proclus et l'orphisme*, in Pépin–Saffrey eds., *Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens* (1987), 43–103. On the Orphic religion, see: Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (1993). A. Uždavinys, *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism* (London, 2011). L. J. Aldernik, *Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism* (Chico, CA, 1981). C. Segal, *Orpheus: The Myth and the Poet* (London, 1989). M. Herrero Jáuregui, *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity* (Berlin–New York, 2010).

65 *Orphicorum Fragmenta*, Pars posterior, 82 [2] Kern.

66 On this see A. Bernabé, *The Gods in Later Orphism*, in Erskine, *The Gods of Ancient Greece* (2010), 433–436.

67 With regard to this fundamental principle of Prolcus' philosophy, see R. Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (2012), 83–92. L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (1996), 51–56. M. Martijn–L. P. Gerson, *Proclus' System*, in d' Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 58–61.

68 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 103; 140; 142 Dodds. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 842, 11–19 Cousin. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 26, 25–28 Diehl.

69 Plato, *Res publica*, 614 B–621 C Burnet.

70 Ibid., 616 B–D Burnet.

71 Ibid., 617 C–D Burnet.

72 Ibid., 620 E–621 A Burnet.

73 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 88–89 and note 83.

74 S. Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira: A Study of Hekate's Role in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature* (Atlanta, 1990).

75 W. Fauth, *Hekate Polymorphos–Wesensvarianten einer antiken Gottheit: Zwischen frühgriechischer Theogonie und spätantikem Synkretismus* (Hamburgh, 2006).

E. Butler, *Flower of Fire: Hekate in the Chaldean Oracles*, in Sannion et al. eds., *Bearing Torches: A Devotional Anthology for Hekate* (Eugene, OR, 2009), 140–157. L. Bergmann, *Kraftmetaphysik und Mysterienkult im Neuplatonismus* (Leipzig, 2006), 271–344. D. Burns, *The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster*, Hekate's Couch, and Platonic Orientalism in Psellos and Plethon: *Aries* 2 (6) (2006) 158–179. S. Ronan, *The Goddes Hekate* (Hastings, 1992). C. Theis, *Hekate Triformis auf Gemmen*, in S. Kiyanrad–C. Theis–L. Willer eds., *Bild und Schrift auf ‚magischen' Artefakten* (Berlin–Boston, 2018), 165–180. T. Kraus, *Hekate*. Studien zu Wesen und Bild der Göttin in Kleinasien und Griechland (Heidelberg, 1960). I. R. von Rudloff, *Hekate in Ancient Greek Religion* (Victoria, BC, 1999). N. Werth, *Hekate*. Untersuchungen zur dreigstaltigen Göttin (Hamburg, 2006).

76 S. Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira* (1990), 49–70; 153–163.

77 L. Brisson, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Théologie platonicienne*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 139–140. P. Hoffmann agrees with Brisson; see id., *Φάος et τόπος: le fragment 51 (v. 3) des Places (p. 28 Kroll) des* Oracles Chaldaïques *selon Proclus et Simplicius (Corollarium de loco)*, in Lecerf–Saudelli–Seng, *Oracles Chaldaïques* (2014), 106–108 and notes 21–22.

78 R. van den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns* (2001), 40; 252–259.

79 J. F. Finamore–S. Iles Johnston, *The Chaldean Oracles*, in L. P. Gerson ed., *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2010), 165 and note 16 (with a list of the scholars who held the position that Hecate must be identified with the World Soul), 166.

80 Ibid., 165.

81 Ibid., 166 *contra* H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016) 55 and P. Hoffmann (who follows Seng), *Φάος et τόπος*, in Lecerf–Saudelli–Seng, *Oracles Chaldaïques* (2014), 107–108.

82 P. Hoffmann, *Φάος et τόπος*, in Lecerf–Saudelli–Seng, *Oracles Chaldaïques* (2014), 117–118.

83 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 58, 3–10 Diehl where the empyrean region is linked with Intellect, the etheric with Soul.

84 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 201, 15–30 Kroll; ibid., 19: the Oracles have regarded 'all (*scil.* worlds) as material' (πάντας οὕτω καλοῦντα τοὺς ὑλάιους); ibid., 21–24: 'The Light . . . is a body that differs from the worlds, the ether and fire' (τὸ δὲ φῶς . . . σῶμα ἐστιν διαφέρον τῶν κόσμων τοῦ αἰθέρος τοῦ πυρός).

85 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 129, 76, 20–25 Pasquali, quoted by P. Hoffmann, *Φάος et τόπος*, in Lecerf–Saudelli–Seng, *Oracles Chaldaïques* (2014), 118 and note 53.

86 Simplicius, *In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria*, H. Diels ed., vols. 1–2 (Berlin, 1882–1895), 611, 8–614, 5, quoted in P. Hoffmann, *Φάος et τόπος*, in Lecerf–Saudelli–Seng, *Oracles Chaldaïques* (2014), 120–135.

87 Ibid., 613, 15, in ibid., 130–131.

88 Ibid., 614, 1–614, 5 in ibid., 133–135.

89 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 15, 54, 1–20; 18, 58, 12–20; 21, 74, 23–27–75, 1–11; 27, 95, 10–25; IV. 32, 97, 1–10; V. 5, 23, 1–20; 16, 55, 10–30; 17, 63, 10–20; 22, 81, 1–15; 27, 100, 1–15 (where the Living Being is called principle of life for all beings) Saffrey–Westernik.

90 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 74 and note 1.

91 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 154.

92 The Connectors are mentioned by the following fragments: 80, 82, 177 and 207 des Places.

93 See fragments 76 and 77 des Places. The term ὕυγξ appears only in fragment 223 (regarded as non-authentic by des Places) but is frequently linked by Neo-Platonists with the *Chaldean Oracles*.

94 See fragments 86, 177 des Places.
95 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 154. See also É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 74 and note 4. On the Connectors, see H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 129–131; on the Iynges, see ibid., 132–137; on the Teletarchs, ibid., 137–164.
96 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2017), 77–78.
97 See R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 164.
98 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 90 and note 91.
99 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 165 who follows H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 90 and note 94; des Places seems to follow Lewy as well, see id., *Oracula chaldaica*, 81.
100 Plato, *Res publica*, 3, 390 B–C Burnet.
101 Homeric passages quoted by Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 132, 28–30–133, 1–5 Kroll.
102 Ibid., 137, 1–20.
103 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 164, 5–20 Diehl. Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 138, 79, 5–15; 169, 92, 30–94, 1–15 Pasquali. On this see Opsomer, La démiurgie des jeunes dieux selon Proclus (2003) 10 and note 31, who also refers to Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 182, 22–190, 4 Diehl. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, VI, 93, 1–11 Saffrey–Westernik.
104 Ibid., 162, 20–163 Diehl.
105 Who, as Lewy, points out, Proclus in turn identifies with Hecate: see id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 84 and note 66.
106 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 3, 16, 5–20; 11, 36–40; 23, 87, 10–15 Saffrey–Westernik. Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 101, 52, 9; 142, 80, 15–30–81, 1–15; 144, 82, 17–27 Pasquali.
107 On this fundamental triad see W. Beierwaltes, *Proclo – i fondamenti della sua metafisica* (1990), 137–161. P. d'Hoine, *Platonic Forms and the Triad of Being, Life and Intellect*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 98–121.
108 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 355 and note 163, where he refers to Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 130, 23; 246, 19; 293, 23 Diehl.
109 L. G. Soares Santoprete, *L'emploi du terme « ἀμφίστομος » dans le grand traité antignostique de Plotin et dans les* Oracles Chaldaiques, in Seng–Tardieu, *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel* (2010), 165–166.
110 On this, see ibid., 167–168.
111 Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 895, 5 Cousin.
112 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 130. Majercik rightly refers 'ἐμὸν' to Hecate (see id., *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 158).
113 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 20, 75, 25 Saffrey–Westernik.
114 As R. M. van den Berg, author of one of the most important studies on Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus* explicitly says: id., *Proclus' Commentary on the Cratylus in Context: Ancient Theories of Language and Learning* (Leiden–Boston, 2008), 182.
115 Ibid., 180–184.
116 Plato, *Timaeu*s, 28 C Burnet.
117 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 20–50 Diehl; in particular see III. 38, 1–5; 49, 20–30–50, 1–10 Diehl. See also W. O'Neill, Time and Eternity in Proclus: *Phronesis*, 2 (7) (1962) 161–165. H. S. Lang, Perpetuity, Eternity and Time in Proclus' Cosmos: *Phronesis* 2 (50) (2005) 150–169. D. G. MacIsaac, *Projection and Time in Proclus*, in J. Inglis ed., *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition: In Islam, Judaism and Christianity* (Richmond, Surrey, UK, 2002), 83–105. S. Sambursk–S. Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism, Texts with Translations, Introductions and Notes* (Jerusalem, 1971), 48–63.

118 Plato, *Parmenides*, 146 A–B.
119 Homer, *Ilias*, T. W. Allen ed., vols. 2–3 (Oxford, 1931), 24, 527–533.
120 Numénius, fr. 11, 13–19 des Places.
121 É. des Places translates 'd'introduire la sensation dans le mondes' (id., *Oracula chaldaica*, 68), while A.-J. Festugière's rendering is the following: 'de donner sentiment (= vie, αἴσθησιν) aux mondes' (id., *La révélation d'Hermes Trismégiste*, vol. III [1950; repr. 1990], 55–56). See also H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 114–115 and note 187; P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 201 and note 1; 261 and note 2. Contrary to these previous intepreters, R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 145 believes that 'τῷδε' does not refer to the Demiurge, but to the Father or the First Intellect, beside whom the dyad would then be placed. She criticizes Dillon since he, following the scholars previously mentioned, believes the dyad of fragment 8 des Places to refer to the Demiurgic Intellect, who, as Second Intellect, would then be placed at the bottom of the hierarchy: Father, First Intellect, Second Intellect = dyad (see id., The Concepts of Two Intellects: A Footnote to the History of Platonism: *Phronesis* [18] [1973] 176–185, especially 177–179). Majercik says that Dillon's reconstruction 'cannot be affirmed on the basis of the fragments', without adducing any conclusive proof to demonstrate this assertion, saying instead that, compared with the scheme proposed by Dillon, 'the *Oracles*, perhaps, were moving in this direction, but essentially remained fluid in doctrine'. On our part we side decisively with Dillon.
122 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 98, 28–29–99, 1–4 Kroll.
123 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 22, 82, 8–12 Saffrey–Westernik. See also ibid., VI. 12, 63, 24–28–64, 1–2; 14, 71, 19–21 Saffrey–Westernik.
124 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 173, 22–23 Kroll. See also Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 1149, 10–17 Cousin. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 37, 10–11 Diehl. On the dyad in the superior triads, see Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 31, 93–35, 105 Saffrey–Westernik. On the dyad as 'the first reality that proceeds from the One' (πρώτη γὰρ ἡ δυὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς προῆλθεν), see Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 661, 29; 741, 4–5; 759, 38 Cousin.
125 See also Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 142, 23; 361, 30; II. 58, 1–2 Diehl.
126 Ibid., I. 12, 10–18 Diehl. See also ibid., I. 142, 23, 361, 30; II. 58, 1–2 Diehl.
127 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 37, 4.
128 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 63.
129 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 101, 51, 27–30 Pasquali.
130 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 284, 160, 15–22 Ruelle.
131 Ibid., II. 310, 176, 23–24 Ruelle.
132 Ibid., II. 311, 177, 26 Ruelle.
133 Ibid., II. 311, 177, 22–23 Ruelle.
134 É. Des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 75 and note 1.
135 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 155.
136 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 270, 136, 7–12 Ruelle.
137 It must be said that Lewy denies that the name 'Ρείη' refers to Rhea but interpretes it as the feminine of 'ῥᾷδιος' (see id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* [2011], 84 and note 65); however, his position has not gained the approval of other scholars, such as des Places (id., *Oracula chaldaica*, 134) and Majercik (id., *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 156). It must be pointed out that this is the only Chaldean fragment that mentions the goddess Rhea.
138 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 84 and note 66.
139 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, I. 14, 61, 1 Saffrey–Westernik.
140 Ibid., III. 16, 56, 5–7, 25; III. 18, 58, 1–25–59, 1–7; 60, 13 Saffrey–Westernik.

141 Ibid., I. 11, 51, 5–10; 26, 117, 1–19 (where Eternity is said to communicate eternal life to all beings) Saffrey–Westernik.
142 Ibid., III. 16, 54, 20–25–55, 1–5 Saffrey–Westernik.
143 Ibid., III. 18, 60, 15–28; V. 30, 109, 10–25; 38, 141, 5–15 Saffrey–Westernik.
144 Ibid., III. 16, 55, 10–14 Saffrey–Westernik.
145 Ibid., III, 18, 59, 16–26 Saffrey–Westernik.
146 On these topics, see also Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, IV. 1–52, 30 Diehl.
147 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oralces and Theurgy* (2011), 101 and note 149, where fr. 199 des Places is quoted; P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 386 and note 1. É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 79 and note to fr. 49 (where des Places refers fr. 49 to Aion). R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 162.
148 On the god Aion, a classical study is A. J. Festugière's, *La revelation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, vol. 4 (1954), 152–199, which focuses on how this god is presented in Hermeticism, in the Eleusinian tradition and in the Greek Magical Papyri. The god Aion, identified with Mithras and Helios, represents the supreme deity of the so called 'Mithras Liturgy': *The "Mithras* Liturgy", 520, 51 Betz ('For today I am going to envision with immortal eyes – I, a mortal born from a mortal womb, but improved through the exceedingly powerful might and the imperishable right hand | and with the immortal spirit, [to envision] the immortal Aion and lord of the fiery diadems'); see also ibid., 590. On Aion as supreme God, one can also consult *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, vols. 1–2, K. Preisedanz et al. eds. (Stuttgart, 1973–1974), I. 165 ('And this is spoken next: "Hither to me, King, [I call you] God of Gods, mighty, boundless, undefiled, indescribable, firmly established Aion. / Be inseparable from me from this day forth through all the time of my life."' E. O' Neil trans., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, H. D. Betz ed. [Chicago and London, 1986], 7); XIII, 65–70 ('I call on you, who are greater than all, the creator of all, you, the self-begotten, who see all and are not seen. For you gave Helios the glory and all the / power, Selene [the privilege] to wax and wane and have fixed courses, yet you took nothing from the earlier-born darkness, but apportioned things so that they should be equal. For when you appeared, both order arose and light appeared. All things are subject to you, whose true form none of the gods can / see; who change into all forms. You are invisible, Aion of Aion.' M. Smith trans., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, H. D. Betz ed., 174. Aion also figures in the Hermetic treatises; among them is the Nag-Hammadi text entitled *Discourse on the Eight and Ninth*, VI. 66, 10 Parrot. With regard to the *Corpus Hermeticum* see ibid., XI, 20, 1–15; XII, 8, 1–10; XIII, 20 Nock–Festugière. On Aion conceived of as seemingly identical with 'Eternity' see ibid., XI, 2–5; 15. *Asclepius*, 30–32; 40 Nock–Festugière. Finally, it must be considered that Aion was one of the most important divinities of the Mithraic pantheon: see M. Clauss, *The Roman Cult of Mithras*, R. Gordon trans. (New York, 2001), 162–167. R. Turcan, *Mithras platonicus–Recherches sur l'hellenisation philosophique de Mithra* (Leiden, 1975), 117–119; 131. F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithras*, T. J. MacCormack trans. (Chicago, 1903), 107–112.
149 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 65.
150 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 99; 101.
151 Ibid., 110–111; 115–117. H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 64.
152 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 152. É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 148. R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 209 ('The inference here is that the 'truer sun' [or Aion] functions as the Source of time').
153 The concept of Aion in Gnosticism varies considerably: sometimes it is simply a designation of the First Principle, and in this case it is superior to the Chaldean

Aion (see for example Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, I. 1, 1, 1–6 Harvey), while other times the noun 'aion' refers to the divine hypostases emanated from the Supreme Aion (ibid., 29–31), and in this respect its usage is closer to the Chaldean one.

154 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 20, 1–30 Diehl.

155 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, D. Baltzly trans., vol. 5 (Cambridge, 2013), 69 and note 82.

156 With regard to this topic, R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 213, points out that while Lewy believed Aion and Time to be identical (id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* [2011], 103 and note 154), E. R. Dodds defended the opposite postion (id., New Light on the 'Chaldaean Oracles' [1961] 266.). Majercik also points out that Aion and Time appear in Synesius as well (id, *Hymni*, N. Terzaghi ed. [Rome, 1939] 8 (9) 67–69).

157 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 208 with a discussion of relevant literature.

158 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 53, 15–30–54, 5–15 Diehl.

159 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 127. É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 77 and note 2. R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 158–159. H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 73–76.

160 On Uranus in Prolcus' system, see Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 110, 59, 25–64, 1–10 Pasquali. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 5, 21, 5–25–22, 1–5; 22, 66, 15–20 Saffrey–Westernik.

161 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 70 and note 2.

162 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 148.

163 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 126.

164 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 148.

165 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 160 and note 355.

166 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 99 and note 6.

167 R. Majercik, The *Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 149 refers to Synesius, *Hymni*, I(3), 132, 189; 5(2), 27; 9(1), 116; 1(3), 411 Terzaghi, while des Places quotes Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 312, 7–8 Diehl (ἔστι γὰρ πέρας τοῦ πατρικοῦ βυθοῦ καὶ ἡ πηγὴ τῶν νοερῶν) and Michael Psellus, *De Omnifaria doctrina*, L. G. Westernik ed. (Nimègue, 1948), III. 105, 46–106, 2. With regard to Gnostic sources, we can consider: Ireaneus, *Adversus haereses*, I. 1, 1, 1; 21, 2; 30, 1. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus und Panarion*, I. 384, 19, 21; 386, 1, 9; 392, 4, 21; 393, 11; 401, 14; 450, 7–8 Holl. Hyppolytus, *Werke*, VI. 30, 7–8 Wendland. Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 2, 29, 1, 2 Sagnard. In the Nag-Hammadi texts, the term 'abyss' could be used in a negative sense as synonym for chaotic matter; see for example *The Tripartite Tractate*, I, 89, 25–30 Attridge. This term also appears in the Greek Magical Papyri with reference to the First Principle; see *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, III. 555; IV, 3060–3065; XII, 345 Preisedanz.

168 See also Michael Italicus, *Epistula 17*, 181,10 in É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 214 = Michel Italikos, *Lettres et Discours*, P. Gautier ed. (Paris, 1972).

169 R. Majercik, The *Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 149. For a list of parallels see M. Tardieu, *La Gnose Valentinienne et les Oracles Chaldaïques*, in B. Layton ed., *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (1983), 205–209.

170 Proclus seems to have fragment 87 in mind in *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 255, 25–30 Diehl, where he describes the Demiurge as 'Name-Giver'.

171 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 133–134 and note 256.

172 On them, see ibid., 135–137.

173 Lewy (ibid., 133) refers to Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 209, 92, 23 Ruelle= Kroll p. 40 and ibid., II. 198, 78, 13–79, 1–22; 223, 103, 11 Ruelle.

174 With regard to the function the Iynges perform of mediating between the Father and inferior orders of being, Lewy refers to Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 1199, 36 Cousin and Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 71, 33, 14–16 (καὶ τὸ διαπόρθμιον ὄνομα τῶν ἰύγγων, ὃ πάσας ἀνέχειν λέγεται τὰς πηγάς).
175 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 88 and R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 175.
176 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 71, 33, 15 Pasquali.
177 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 214, 95, 22–25 Ruelle (τρεῖς γὰρ ἤδη διωρισμέναι αἱ ἴυγγες).
178 Ibid., II. 213, 95, 12–18 Ruelle.
179 Ibid., II. 198, 78, 13–15 Ruelle.
180 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 149, 1–5 O' Meara.
181 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 137 and R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 172.
182 Proclus, *In primum Euclidis elementorum librum commentarii*, G. Friedlein ed. (Leipzig, 1873).
183 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 112, 290, 18 Ruelle.
184 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 39, 111, 10–15 Saffrey–Westernik. L. Brisson, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Theol. Plat.*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 133. See also id., *La commentaire come priere*, in Goulet-Cazé, *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation* (2000), 336.
185 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 257, 125, 19–20 Ruelle.
186 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 130.
187 Ibid., 129–131. R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 173; 197; 215.
188 Ibid., followed by P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 306 and note 4; É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 137 and R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 174.
189 ('Πάντας γὰρ συνέχων αὐτὸς πᾶς ἔξω ὑπάρχει').
190 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV, 21, 63, 26–28–64, 10–15 Saffrey–Westernik.
191 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247 C Burnet.
192 The same interpretation in L. Brisson, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Theol. Plat.*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 132.
193 L. Brisson, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Theol. Plat.*, in Segonds-Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 132. Id., *La commentaire come priere*, in Goulet-Cazé, *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation* (2000), 343.
194 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 151, 21–22 O' Meara.
195 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 112, 290, 20–21 Ruelle.
196 Of a different view is H. Seng, who believes the Connectors to be a sort of 'particuar Eros'; see id., *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 77.
197 *The Six Books of Proclus, the Platonic Successor, On the Theology of Plato*, vol. 1, T. Taylor trans. (London, 1816), 307.
198 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 24, 73, 5–10 Saffrey–Westernik. On this aspect of the Teletarchs, see L. Brisson, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Theol. Plat.*, in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 133–136.
199 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 137–157.
200 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, I. 112, 290, 16–17 Ruelle. See also id., *In Parmenidem*, II. 252, 122, 16–17; 255, 124, 16 Ruelle.

201 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 146, 15–16 (μετὰ δὲ τοῦς συνοχεῖς οἱ τελετάρχαι). See also ibid. 149, 11–12 O'Meara.
202 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 149.
203 Ibid., 140.
204 Ibid., 137–138.
205 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 137–138. R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 174, who also quotes Synesius, *Hymni*, 9(1), 118–119; 1(3), 617–618; 2(4), 285; 3(5), 67 Terzaghi.
206 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 39, 111, 18–23 Saffrey–Westernik.
207 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 205, 87, 9–14 Ruelle.
208 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 149, 9–10 O'Meara. But see also Michael Italicus, *Epistle 17*, 181, 31–33 Gautier = É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 215.
209 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 102–103 and note 152; 141.
210 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 157–158,162.
211 E. R. Dodds, New Light on the 'Chaldaean Oracles': *The Harvard Theological Review* 4 (54) (1961) 266.
212 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 174.
213 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 39, 111, 10–15 Saffrey–Westernik.
214 Michael Italicus, *Epistula 17*, 182, 19–30 Gautier = É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 215.
215 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 254, 123, 1–19 Ruelle.
216 Ibid. See also R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 174. L. Brisson, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques dans la Theol. Plat*., in Segonds–Steel, *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* (2000), 135; id., *La commentaire come priere*, in Goulet-Cazé, *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation* (2000), 343.
217 On this see also H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 252–253, and note 93. R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 177–178.
218 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 240, 30–241, 20 Diehl.
219 Ibid., I. 408, 10–30 Diehl.
220 Ibid., II. 263, 5–15; 298, 15–30–299, 5–10 Diehl.
221 See for example, Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 147, 5.
222 H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 80.
223 M. Tardieu, *Concordance*, in M. Tardieu–E. R. Dodds–P. Hadot, *Compléments*, in H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 680.
224 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 210.
225 Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 646–647 Cousin.
226 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora* 147, 12–13 O'Meara.
227 Ibid., 150, 16–18 O' Meara.
228 Ibid., 147, 8, 11–12 O' Meara. Majercik (*The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 210) duly reports that the term Ἄζωνοι is also mentioned by Synesius, *Hymni*, 1(3), 282–283 Terzaghi. On the Ζῶναι and Ἄζωνοι see H. Seng, *ΚΟΣΜΑΓΟΙ, AZONOI, ZONAIOI* – Drei Begriffe chaldaeischer Kosmologie und ihr Fortleben (Heidelberg, 2009).
229 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 130, 9, 19–20 Ruelle.
230 Ibid., 131, 10, 28; 132, 11, 14–15; 352, 214, 15–17 and 362, 218, 26–27 Ruelle (where Damascius strongly emphazises the transcendence of these entities).
231 Ibid., 362, 218, 26–27; 365, 219 Ruelle.
232 See for example Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, VI. 1, 6, 25–28 Saffrey–Westernik.
233 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, III. 43, 14–18 Diehl.
234 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 142, 80, 15–25–81, 1–15 Pasquali.

235 On these gods, see for example Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 148, 83, 10–176, 103, 5 Pasquali.
236 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 352, 214, 13–17 Ruelle.
237 Ibid. II. 352, 214 Ruelle.
238 See for example Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 148, 83, 10–161, 89, 15 Pasquali. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, VI. 17, 82, 15–24, 112, 5 Saffrey–Westernik and, in particular VI. 19, 87, 7–10.

3 The world's intellectual archetype and the creation of the material dimension

3.1 The world of intellectual Ideas

Fragment 37 des Places = p. 23–24 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm.*, 800, 11–801, 1–5 Cousin)

> And the Gods have consented to reveal to men the truth about these matters, and have told (us) what the unique source of the Ideas is, how the fullness of the Ideas was established and how they proceed and assimilate to the Father of the cosmos all things that are in it, both wholes and parts. There is nothing bad (if), on account of the interest of our hearers in these doctrines, (we) recall to our memory what can be found in the *Chaldean Oracles*:
>
> **The Intellect of the Father whirred, thinking with his**
> **unwearying will multiform Ideas:**
> **And they all leapt out of this single source;**
> **For this was the paternal (Intellect)'s will and goal.**
> **But they were divided by the Intellectual Fire (scil. the Demiurge)**
> **And distributed among other intellectual (orders).**
> **For their lord (scil. the Demiurge) had set**
> **Before the multiform cosmos an eternal intellectual model;**
> **To the trace of its form (the sensible cosmos) hastened in its disorder,**
> **And (this) appeared according to (its own) form, graced with manifold Ideas.**
> **Of which there was one source, from which they rushed forth**
> **Innumerable others burst forth and were divided**
> **Through the bodies of the cosmos, going to and fro like bees**
> **About the abysses of the world terrible to look on,**
> **And lightening straightaway, now in a way, now in another –**
> **Intellectual Ideas (emanated) from the paternal source,**
> **Laying hold of the mighty flower of fire,**
> **At the culmination of unresting time**
> **This primary and perfect source of the Father (scil. the Father's Intellect)**
> **Has gushed forth these primal Ideas.**

The poetic beauty of this fragment is evident, but its philosophical content is also of the utmost importance insofar as it describes the procession of the Ideas from the Father's Intellect, third member of the Chaldean triad. Until they are inside the Father's Intellect, the source from which they came, the Ideas exist in a state of concentration and unification that makes them virtually indistinguishable from one another; but once they are emanated (the fragment says 'leap out') from it, the Demiurge, called here Intellectual Fire (πῦρ νοηρός), separates them one from another and assigns them to their respective orders according to the paternal Intellect's will. The use by the authors of the Oracles of anthropomorphic features to describe divine hypostases whose true nature is beyond the grasp of human mind has already been noted, as well as the combination of philosophical, mostly Platonic, jargon with expressions belonging to the semantic world of religious devotion.[1] It is then difficult to say with precision whether the will of the paternal Intellect was a hypostasis separate from it or just one of its faculties. The same concept also appears in fragments 77, 2; 81, 2; 107, 4 des Places, where it is referred to the Father; even in these cases, one cannot say with precision whether this is one of the Father's faculties or an independent hypostasis emanated from Him, though the first alternative seems more probable.[2]

The fact that oracular fragments such as 5 and 33 des Places give the Demiurge the responsibility for organizing the 'fiery world' authorizes us to assume that the substantive 'ἄναξ' (lord) in line 5 should be referred to Him and not to the Paternal Intellect, considering also that the context in which this word is used directly links the 'multiform cosmos' (κόσμος πολύμορφος) with the 'intellectual model' (νοερὸν τύπον) that the Demiurge had established.

The distinction between the Father's Intellect and the Demiurge or Second Intellect is clearly shown by fragment 7 des Places, which enjoins us not to confuse them, as well as by Proclus, who, in the continuation of the passage where fragment 37 des Places is quoted, distinguishes the 'single universal cause of the encosmic ideas' (ἐγκοσμίων εἰδῶν . . . τὴν μίαν καὶ ὁλικὴν αἰτίαν), that is the Demiurge, from 'the primary manifestation of the whole series of them (*scil*. the Ideas)' (ἀπάσης τῆς σειρᾶς τῶν ἰδεῶν τὴν πρώτην ἔκφανσιν) in the third member of the third intelligible triad, namely in the *Timaeus*' Living Being.[3] In conclusion, Proclus' interpretation of this part of fragment 37 can be regarded as coherent with its original meaning.

The last part of the fragment explains that the Ideas multiply by becoming more and more specific and particular, being then 'scattered' by the Demiurge (as Proclus himself points out)[4] over the material cosmos like a 'swarm of bees', contributing to giving it a shape according to the intellectual archetype they collectively represent.[5]

The penultimate line of the Oracle attributes to the Father, not to the paternal Intellect, the emanation of the Ideas. This must not necessarily be in contrast with what the fragment had said before since it is ultimately from the Father in His monadic aspect that everything derives, including His

Intellect from which the Ideas have emerged, so that the Father is the Ideas' true source,[6] even if in making them come into existence He has recourse to His paternal Intellect.

3.2 The division of all things into triads

Fragment 22 Des Places = p. 18 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm.*, 1090, 31–1091, 1–9 Cousin; *In Tim.*, III. 243, 20 Diehl)

> If then things are like this, it is clear that one must suppose these 'Many' (to be) (either in the intelligible multiplicity) or in the primal (intellectual)–intelligible multiplicity; because these many, in their quality as many, have been caused to exist by the One only, and from these the triadic (order) also proceeds from above to below, (that is), in the intellectual, in the supra-cosmic, and in the sensible (dimensions), and everything which in such manner participates in Being participates in this triad. One of the gods says:
>
> **For the Intellect of the Father said all things be divided in Threes,**
> **Governing them all through the Intellect of the first eternal Father**
> **And He consented to this,**
> **And all things were so divided.**

The creation of the cosmos does not follow a casual trajectory but is based on a precise plan; all things, Proclus says, be they intelligible, intellectual, hyper-cosmic and sensible, have been organized according to a triadic model, which then represents one of those symbols[7] that the paternal Intellect has distributed across the world to allow man to discover traces of the divine in everything he meets during his permanence in the material dimension. Proclus bases this fundamental principle of his philosophy on fragment 22 des Places, where it is said that the Intellect of the Father (νοῦς πατρὸς) established all things be divided in threes.

We would tend to agree with des Places' interpretation according to which[8] the 'Intellect of the Father' mentioned here must be identified with the Demiurge, not with the Father's Intellect, since the Demiurge's activity of separating the Ideas one from another and organizing them hierarchically surely implies their division into triads, as the fragment says. The problematic aspect of this interpretation is that Proclus makes use of this fragment to show that the triadic division inheres in all levels of Being, from the intelligible (which in the Chaldean system coincides with the triad Father – Power – Intellect) through the intellectual to the material dimension. If Proclus' interpretation is correct, the fragment should refer instead to the Father's Intellect and imply that the Ideas it contains are already organized triadically, though they will be subject to further division as a consequence of the action of the Demiurge. Lewy[9] agrees with this interpretation, followed by Hadot,[10] who attributes to the paternal Intellect the

triadic division of the intelligible world.[11] In favour of this interpretation is also the fact that the designation 'Intellect of the Father' points clearly in the direction of the Father's Intellect, not of the Demiurge. In conclusion, this second interpretation is probably the best because it also agrees with the Proclean context in which fragment 22 des Places is quoted, even if the evidence available does not allow us to establish it with absolute certainty.

3.3 The cosmic triad Faith – Truth – Eros

Fragment 46 Des Places = p. 26 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. I. 212.19–23 Diehl)

> He (*scil*. he who prays) should maintain the order of (his) sacred actions unmoved and set before himself the virtues that purify from generation and uplift the soul, and also **Faith, Truth and Eros**, that very triad, as well as hope of good things, unchanging reception of divine light and detachment from all other pursuits.

Fragment 46 and 48 Des Places = p. 26 Kroll (Proclus, *In Alc*. 51, 8–53, 1–2 Westernik)

> There are indeed three hypostases among the intelligible and hidden gods, and the first is characterized by the good ('thinking the Good itself where the paternal monad is' says the Oracle [fr. 11 des Places]), the second by wisdom where the first intellection (is) and the third by beauty where the most beautiful of the intelligibles is as in Timaeus' account. Three monads exist in accordance with these intelligible causes; being in the intelligibles causally and unitarily, they revealed themselves in the 'unspeakable' order of the gods first, that is, **Faith**, **Truth** and **Eros**: the first placing and establishing all beings in the Good, the second revealing the knowledge that lies in all beings, the third turning them back and joining them to the nature of the beautiful. This very triad proceeds from above to all divine orders and illuminates all beings with intelligible union; it appears differently according to different orders, combining its own powers with what is peculiar to the gods. As we said, sometimes it (appears) inexpressibly, unknowably and unitarily, other times as holding and binding (all things) together as well as perfectively and formatively; sometimes intellectually and paternally, other times as putting (beings) in motion and calling (them) to life as well as productively; sometimes authoritatively and assimilatively, other times freely and immaculately as well as by way of multiplication and separately. Eros then goes back and forth from the intelligibles above to encosmic (beings below) turning everything back to the divine beauty while Truth enlightens the All with knowledge and Faith establishes each being in the Good. '**For everything**,' says the Oracle '**is governed and exists in these three**'; and for this reason the gods recommend to the theurgists to unite themselves with God through this triad.

Proclus quotes fragment 46 des Places in two contexts: on the one hand, in his excursus on prayer in the *Timaeus* Commentary (206, 26–214, 12 Diehl), which we will analyze in Chapter 4; on the other hand, during his discussion of the role Eros performs to keep all things together through the bond of love. Proclus says this entity originated from Beauty, which in turn forms a triad together with Good and Wisdom. The Good can be identified with the summit of the first intelligible triad and the Chaldean Father (as Proclus' quotation of fragment 11 des Places shows), Wisdom with the second intelligible triad, while Beauty with the third member of the third intelligible triad, the Platonic Living Being of *Timaeus* 30 D Burnet. Each of these causes, which manifests itself in the intelligible dimension but preexists in the henadic one, generates three monads respectively – the Good, Faith; Wisdom, Truth; Beauty, Eros – which all together form the triad Faith – Truth – Eros mentioned by fragment 46. This is described by Proclus as 'being in the intelligibles causally and unitarily' (κατ᾽αἰτίαν μὲν ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς οὖσαι καὶ ἑνοειδῶς), that is, as preexisting in the intelligible dimension in a concentrated and unitary condition, which is exactly what fragment 37 des Places said about the Ideas that exist inside the paternal Intellect. But the similarity goes even further: by pointing out that the triad Faith – Truth – Eros 'appears differently according to different orders', 'holds and binds all things together', manifests itself 'intellectually and paternally' (νοερῶς καὶ πατρικῶς) as well as 'by way of multiplication and separately' (πεπληθυσμένως καὶ διῃρημένως), Proclus has recourse to a cluster of concepts very similar to that which fragment 37 des Places used to describe the Ideas emanated from the paternal Intellect and separated from one another by the Demiurge to form the intellectual archetype of the sensible world. We can assume then that in explaining the triad Faith – Truth – Eros, Proclus is following Chaldean teachings (especially those contained in fragments 22, 48 and 37) since his attribution of an intellectual nature to this triad links it very closely with the intellectual triads established by the Chaldean Demiurge. It is also important to assess whether the Eros that is a member of the triad Faith – Truth – Eros is the same as the single hypostasis with the same name of fragments 39 and 42 des Places. We think that this is the case, for two reasons: 1) these two fragments, like Proclus' exegesis here, say that Eros came into existence from the Father's Intellect; 2) Hadot has shown with good arguments (see earlier par. 3.2) that for both *Proclus and the* Chaldean Oracles, the triadic division already inheres in the intelligible dimension, although, of course, the degree of distinction and separation between hypostases/Ideas is far lower here than in the intellectual dimension.

Coming now to the functions performed by each members of the triad, Faith is said to establish the universe and connect it with the Good, Truth reveals to all beings the knowledge of the First Principle, a trace of which they contain in themselves, while Eros turns them back to the divine source from which they came into existence. As Proclus explains in his *Platonic Theology*,[12] it is from the love Beauty has both for itself and for the Father that

Eros is born. Of course, at this stage Eros is still an intelligible monad, while in the triad Faith – Truth – Eros it manifests itself at the intellectual level.[13]

3.4 The paternal Intellect's 'channels of implacable fire'

Fragment 36 Des Places = p. 21 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.*, 107, 58, 10–15 Pasquali)

> [T]his is why in the Oracles as well he (*scil.* Cronus) is said to embrace the very first fount of the implacable gods, but also to ride upon all others:
>
> **The Intellect of the Father rides upon unyielding Guides,**
> **Which flash unbendingly through the Channels of implacable fire.**

In this fragment, the paternal Intellect is again the protagonist, being identified by Proclus with Cronus, a divinity that in his system represents the summit of the Intellectual world. According to Lewy, the 'Guides' (ἰθυντήρεις) or 'Channels of implacable fire' (ἀμειλίκτου πυρὸς ὁλκοί) mentioned in the first verse of the fragment are the planetary spheres of the material world,[14] but we assume they could refer instead to intellectual entities that assist the paternal Intellect in the performance of its functions; this assumption is based on the fact that, together with Cronus, Proclus also mentions the 'implacable gods', intellectual entities that, as the Chaldean 'Guides', have the function of helping him to govern the intellectual dimension.[15]

A further confirmation that this interpretation could be correct derives from Majercik, who links the 'ἀμειλίκτου πυρὸς' of fragment 36 with an identical expression that appears in fragment 35 Des Places, which she refers to the Ideas that proceed from the paternal Intellect.[16] We believe it is improbable that the same expression could be given to both intellectual and material entities at the same time, so that it is more probable that it refers to intellectual entities or to the same intellectual Ideas organized hierarchically by the Demiurge according to fragment 37.

In addition, it can be pointed out that it would be highly improbable that in a section of his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus* that deals with the etymology of Cronus's name,[17] Proclus quotes a Chaldean fragment that deals with the material dimension and not with the intellectual one.

3.4.1 On the 'Channels of fire' again

Fragments 65 and 66 Des Places = p. 35 Kroll; p. 55 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.* II. 107, 4–11 Diehl; id., *In rem p.*, I. 178, 10–17 Kroll)

> But through these words he explains to us (the nature of the World Soul) according to (its movement of) conversion, when it ensouls the

centre first and then the universe. For the life-generating Channel proceeds up until the centre as the Oracles also say, when they discuss the middle of the five centres which extends from above right through the opposite side via the centre of the earth.

> **And there is the fifth in the middle, another Channel of fire, where the life-bearing fire descends as far as the material Channels.**

And of this (*scil*. of poetry) one is highest and full of divine goods and (it) establishes the soul in the very causes of beings leading what is filled and that which fills (it) to (become) the same (thing) in accordance with an ineffable union, leading the former immaterially and impalpably towards illumination, and inviting the latter to communicate its light,

> **when the Channels are joined together, which bring to fulfilment the work of immortal fire**, according to the Oracle.

The first Proclean passage quoted comments on Plato's *Timaeus* 34 B 3–4 Burnet ('He put the Soul in the middle of the universe and stretched it across the cosmos and then covered the body (of the cosmos) with it from the outside'), which Proclus interprets in the sense that the World Soul starts animating the universe from its centre first then extends itself to its external circumference. To further illustrate this point, Proclus compares the median position of the World Soul in Plato's system with the central position of the fifth 'Channel of fire' of Chaldean cosmology, which, together with the other four, communicates the 'life-bearing fire' (ζωηφόριον πῦρ) coming from superior hypostases (fire being a symbol of their generative power) down to 'the material Channels' (μέχρις ὑλαίων ὀχετῶν). According to Lewy, the mediating Channel which the fragment speaks of must be identified with the sun, given its central position among the other planets.[18] It is true that the sun helps to communicate the divine creative power to material beings as Lewy maintains, and, for this reason, it must certainly be one of the 'material Channels' fragment 65 alludes to; however, this does not imply that this is identical to the 'fifth Channel' since there is nothing in the fragment which supports such a unidirectional reading, all the more because, as we have seen talking about fragment 5 des Places (see par. 1.2), the *Chaldean Oracles* use the term 'fire' as a symbol of the divine and not only as a designation of visible fire, which could be at best regarded as a physical manifestation of the former. It is impossible to establish with precision what these Channels are, but, given the fact that Proclus analogically links them with the Soul, it could be assumed that they have a psychic nature and cooperate with the Demiurge in advancing the creation process.

Fragment 66 is quoted by Proclus in the context of his discussion about the inspired poetry's power of leading the human soul up to union with the divine. After what has been said concerning fragment 65, it seems to be clear that the 'Channels' mentioned here have the function of communicating the gods' 'imperishable fire' (ἄφθιτος πῦρ), that is, their generative power,

to cosmic beings and that in doing so they 'accomplish' the fire's 'work' (ἔργα τελοῦσα), which is to make all beings come into existence.

Lewy does not think this fragment has the same cosmological connotation as fragment 65 but, influenced by Proclus' reading, interprets it as if it referred to the human soul's ascent to the divine through the solar rays coming down to it from the sun.[19] Majercik[20] tentatively accepts Lewy's interpretation, but she also finds it discomforting that the fragment does not show any trace of the 'noetic language' of fragment 1 des Places, which for her would have been more appropriate than the one used here to describe the soul's ascent to the divine dimension. On our part, we think that Proclus' reading (on which Lewy's is based) is not correct and that the fragment should be interpreted in the same sense as fragment 65, that is, cosmologically. If our assumption that the 'Channels' have a psychic nature is correct, it could also explain why Proclus connects them with the human soul.

Finally, the expression 'commingling of the Channels' could probably refer to the Channels' combined action of transmitting the divine fire to all beings, while fragment 65 should describe the activity of the fifth Channel only.

3.5 *Symbola* and *synthemata*[21]

Fragment 108 des Places = p. 50 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.*, 52, 21,10–12 Pasquali)

> [A]nd another oracle says,
>
> **The paternal Intellect sowed symbols in the cosmos**
> **He who thinks the intelligible things that one calls unutterable Beauty.**

Fragment 108, quoted by Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*, says that the paternal Intellect both sows 'symbols' (σύμβολα) throughout the cosmos and contemplates the intelligible dimension; by doing so, it becomes one with the 'ineffable Beauty', probably an appellation of the Father. Proclus confines himself to quoting this oracular saying without commenting on it. In his treatise *On Chaldean Philosophy*,[22] he had referred implicitly to this fragment when he described the moment in which the soul, at the culmination of its ascent to the divine dimension, gives back to the Father the 'ineffable symbols' (ἄρρητα συνθήματα) this had placed in it to allow it to return to Him after acquiring a material body.[23] If then the Ineffable Beauty mentioned by fragment 108 is a designation of the Father as we have supposed, the interpretation of this fragment that Proclus proposes in *On Chaldean Philosophy* can be regarded as overall correct. In the *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*,[24] it is neither the Father nor the paternal Intellect but the Demiurge who puts symbols inside the soul to render it capable of reverting to the divine dimension after entering the material one. Here, by attributing to the Demiurge a function that fragment 108 reserves for the

paternal Intellect, Proclus would seem to deviate from the literal meaning of the Oracle, unless he wanted to say that the Demiurge completes or perfects what the Father's Intellect had already started.

By spreading its symbols all over the world, the paternal Intellect manages to be present in the beings he contributes to create and to preserve its transcendence at the same time.[25] Though ineffable, symbols are also different from each other, since they project different forms.[26] This is so, Proclus says, because symbols never perfectly mirror the objects they symbolize; on the contrary, they are capable of representing their objects even by making use of characteristics that are the very opposite of those that belong by nature to them (this is why poets can represent the gods, who transcend the world of becoming, as if they were subject to its laws).[27] Symbols can help the soul to return to the Father because, as Lewy rightly says, they 'are, on the one hand, identical with the thoughts of the paternal Intellect, on the other, with the potencies of Eros holding together the parts of the universe';[28] they are also called '*synthemata*'[29] and identified with the *voces magicae*,[30] unintelligible combination of vowels and consonants used in theurgical rites and often consisting in words of foreign origin.[31] Lewy regards them all as 'The magical formulae by means of which the theurgist brings about the "unification" with the deity'.[32]

But symbols allow all enmattered beings, not only man's soul, to preserve their connection with that divine dimension to which they ultimately belong; this passage from Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (I. 210, 10–20 Diehl)[33] is in this respect particularly illuminating:

> All beings then both remain in and return to the gods, receiving this power from them as well as double symbols in their essence, the one to remain there, the other so that what has proceeded may return. And it is possible to observe these things not only in souls, but also in the lifeless beings that come after them. For what else is it that produces the sympathy they have towards different powers than the symbols (they have obtained) from nature, which adapt (them) to the different series of the gods? For Nature is hanged upon the gods above and apportioned to the orders of the gods.

3.6 Matter

Fragment 34 des Places = p. 20 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 451, 17–22 Diehl)

> In a similar way, the *Oracles* as well address this very great god (*scil.* the Living Being) as 'Source of sources' and say that he alone has produced all things:
>
> > **From there springs the generation of much-variegated matter,**
> > **Crawling from there, the hurricane makes the flower of its fire become feeble,**

> **Leaping into the abysses of the worlds; for from there all things begin to extend their wonderful rays downwards.**

Fragment 180 des Places = p. 63 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.* III., 325, 32 Diehl); fragment 181 des Places = p. 63 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, III. 326, 1–2 Diehl); fragment 172 des Places = p. 63 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.* III. 325, 31–32 Diehl).

> So in the Republic as well (621 A Burnet) what he called the River Lethe signified the entire nature that creates existence, in which there is also 'the Meadow of Ate', as Empedocles (B 121 Diels – Kranz) also says, and the '**the fury of matter**' and '**the world that hates light**', as the gods say, and the '**twisted rivers by which many are swept away**.'

Fragment 100 des Places = p. 48 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II, 156, 16–18; 346, 25–29–347, 1 Kroll)

> The first are not completely out of (the influence) of matter, while the others are purified from it; we indeed hear the Oracles say that matter is **miserable (or dry)** since it is sterile.
>
> Be clear then that as the Meadow (of which it is the case) here (*Republic* 614 E 3–616 B 3) (represents) the ethereal (place), so the plain (designates) the thick place of the air, in which there is absence of trees capable of making shadow and dryness because of the double (force) (solar) rays (have there); in other words, dryness symbolizes sterile matter, which the Oracles are accustomed to call **miserable (or dry)**.

The principle from which matter is said to derive is called by Proclus 'Source of Sources' (πηγὴ πηγῶν) and identified with the Platonic Living Being (*Timaeus* 30 C–D Burnet).[34] Damascius[35] supports the same interpretation of this Chaldaic expression, which should be added to des Places' list of authentic Chaldean vocabulary. On the origin of matter, Michael Psellus is of a different opinion though, because he believes it was originated by the Chaldean Father.[36] Since the extant fragments of the *Chaldean Oracles* never mention *Timaeus*' Living Being, it is more probable that Psellus' interpretation is closer to original Chaldean doctrine.

Fragment 34 defines matter as 'manifold' (πολυποίκιλος) and explicitly links its emergence with the downward movement from the oneness of the Principle to the always-changing multiplicity of the world of becoming. The power by which the Source of Sources generates matter is described by this fragment as an 'hurricane' (πρηστήρ) of fire that, after reaching its peak (ἄνθος), gradually decreases (πρηστὴρ ἀμυδροῖ), while it penetrates more and more within the most hidden recesses of the worlds.

Fragments 180, 181 and 172 are quoted by Proclus in this order to explain *Republic* 621 A Burnet, where Plato depicts the places of the afterworld visited by the souls that are about to acquire a new material body.

The River Lethe is for Proclus a symbol of matter, which the first two of the three fragments mentioned here describe with the expressions 'the fury of matter' (τὸ λάβρον τῆς ὕλης)[37] and 'the world that hates light' (ὁ μισοφαὴς κόσμος) respectively. The first expression well signifies the impetuous nature of matter, which like a wild river sweeps anything away as fragment 172 des Places also teaches; the second clearly identifies matter with darkness, because matter is as indeterminate and formless as this. The dryness of the plain of *Republic* 621 A Burnet is regarded by Proclus as a symbol of matter as well, in agreement with fragment 100 des Places that describes matter as dry and sterile, since it is incapable of giving life by itself but necessitates to be shaped by the Ideas to become capable of generating.[38]

In conclusion, it seems that Proclus' interpretation of the Chaldean concept of matter, judged from the use he makes of it to explain different aspects of Plato's description of the afterworld, is in line with what probably was the original Chaldean doctrine, which regarded matter as chaotic, formless and dark as well as capable of creating only on account of the action exerted on it by the Ideas emanated from the paternal Intellect through the fundamental intermediation of the Demiurge.[39]

3.7 The four elements and the creation of the material world

Fragment 67 des Places = p. 35 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 50, 16–24 Diehl)

> For he did not say (that he [*scil.* Plato] made the cosmos) simply from fire or water, but from all fire and all water. Through this he points out that in the universe there are many different (degrees) of fire as well as water and that they vary according to (their) essence. Moreover, the theology of the Assyrians hands down the same (doctrines), which are in fact divine revelations. For in these (Oracles), the Demiurge is said to make the whole cosmos '**from fire, from water, earth and all-nourishing aether**', and the Creator is said to create the cosmos with His own hands.

Fragment 68 des Places = p. 35 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 50, 25–27 Diehl)

> **[F]or whatever other mass of fire there was, He worked the All with His own hands, so that the cosmic body may be brought to completion and the world might be visible and not seem (to be) membranous.**

These fragments, clearly connected with each other, are quoted by Proclus to illustrate Plato's *Timaeus* 32 C Burnet, where it is written: 'The Creator composed it (*scil.* the material world) from all (kinds of) fire, water, air and earth, and did not leave outside (of it) any part nor power.' The 'Creator' is of course the Demiurge, who, as Proclus explains, built the material universe from all types of each of the four elements of Greek physics, as also the *Chaldean Oracles* say, with the only difference that in fragment 67 des Places ether replaces air.[40] With regard to fragment 68, Lewy rightly points

out that for Chaldean doctrine, the creation of the material world was posterior to the 'division of the primal matter into four elements provided with qualities' and that the fire which fragment 68 refers to must not be confused with noetic fire, a symbol of the divine creative power.[41] According to fragment 68 the element of fire (of which there are different kinds as Proclus rightly interpreted) has a special importance compared with the others, since it is by availing Himself of it that the Demiurge made the world 'visible' (ἔκδηλος), that is, endowed with form. In this respect, it is important to notice the relationship between visibility and formation, since only what possesses form can be 'visible' (be it a material being, which the four senses can perceive, or an intelligible one, 'visible' through the intellect), while what does not have form, like matter, is invisible, both to the material eyes and to the eye of the soul.

Other two aspects of what Proclus says about fragment 68 des Places must be pointed out, although they have no bearing on cosmology: 1) the attribution of the doctrine described by the fragment to the 'theology of the Assyrians' (τῶν Ἀσσυρίων θεολογία), which shows how Proclus believed in the Oriental provenance of the *Chaldean Oracles*;[42] 2) the description of Chaldean teachings as a 'divine revelation' (θεόθεν ἐκφανθέντα) that for him was in agreement with Plato's philosophy.

3.8 The sun and the encosmic gods

Fragment 59 des Places = p. 33 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. III, 82, 32–83, 1–6 Diehl)

> We then consider the Sun in a double manner: as one of the seven (planets), as a leader of wholes and as both encosmic and hyper-cosmic in so far as it shines with divine light like the Good (shines) with the truth that makes the intelligible-intellectual orders divine. As Phanes, according to Orpheus (frg. 58 Kern), sends out the intelligible light that makes all intellectual gods full of intellection and Zeus kindles the intellectual and creative light for all hypercosmic (orders), so the Sun makes the visible universe bright through this immaculate light and that which illuminates always belongs to an order superior to (that which) is illuminated. Because the Good is not intelligible, nor Phanes intellectual, nor Zeus hypercosmic. According to this argument, being the Sun hypercosmic, it sends the sources of light forth. Indeed, the most mystical discourses have handed down that its wholeness (is) in the hypercosmic (order), because up there (there are) **the Solar cosmos** and the **universal light** – as the (doctrines) of the Chaldeans also say and about which I am persuaded.

Fragment 58 des Places (Proclus, *In rem p*. II. 220, 11–15 Kroll)

> But, I have heard from Chaldean theurgists that God intercalated the sun among the seven (planets) and made dependent from it the other

zones and, from the gods themselves, that (God) **established the solar fire in the place of the heart**.

Fragment 200 des Places = p. 39 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, III. 132, 26–34–133, 1 Diehl; cf. ibid., 63, 23; *In rem p.*, II. 220, 11–15 Kroll)

[A]nd the Theurgist teaches us to conceive both stars and planets in this way: when he is speaking about the creation of the fixed stars (he) says: '(He, *scil.* the Demiurge) did not fasten together a great crowd of unwandering stars by a laborious (or) toilsome effort but through a point of conjunction that has no need to wander' (showing, through the word 'point of conjunction', I assume, the fact that (they always) move in the same way and in the same place), while when he is speaking about the planets he says that, after he established these six, 'he **intercalated** as seventh the Sun's fire in the middle suspending their disorder upon the orderly zones'.

But, I have heard from Chaldean theurgists that then God has **intercalated** the sun among the seven (planets) and has made dependent from it the other zones and, from the gods themselves, that (God) established the solar fire in the place of the heart.

Fragment 167 des Places = p. 65 Kroll (Proclus, *In Euclidem*, 154, 24–155, 1–5 Friedlein)

Such is the center everywhere. It has been set as a goal for those beings to which existence was allotted around it and as the originator of all processions that multiply (the number of beings). This is what the mathematical center represents, since it is that where all lines that (proceed) from it to the circumference terminate and gives equality to them as image of its own unity. It is thus that the Oracles define the center: '**The center, from which all (lines) to the edge are equal**.'

Fragment 168 Des Places = p. 36 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.*, 174, 96, 15–19 Pasquali)

[W]hile the latter (*scil.* Apollo) turns the solar Principles back to a single unity, and '**possesses the triple-winged Principle**', as the Oracle says.

Fragment 60 des Places = p. 33 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 9, 15–18 Diehl)

[A]nd in short, since (there are) many forms of fire, perhaps (Aristotle) will concede to this argument and listen to the theologians who call the sun '**fire, Channel of fire**' and '**dispenser of fire**' and all other such names.

Fragment 61 des Places = p. 33–34 and 47 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, III. 61, 8–25 Diehl)

> [A]nd perhaps the Oracles as well teach us this, since they always place the Moon after the Sun and the air after the Moon and when they describe their order both from above and from below:
>
> > **The etherial course and the immense movement forward of the Moon,**
> > they add,
> > **and airy streams . . .**
> > and again:
> > **Ether, Sun, breath of Moon, airy chiefs.**
> > And in other [verses]:
> > **Of solar circles and lunar soundings and airy gulfs . . .**
> > And next
> > **. . . portion of ether and Sun and Channels of Moon and air . . .**
> > **Portion of ether, Sun, Moon and all those things which swim in the air . . .**
> > And elsewhere
> > **. . . and diffuse air,**
> > **the course of the Moon, and the eternal orbit of the Sun.**

Fragment 71 des Places = p. 36 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 174, 98, 10–15 Pasquali)

> For it is this God (*scil*. Apollo) he who arranges the whole cosmos into a single unity placing the chorus of the Muses around himself, **Taking pride in the harmony of light,** as one of the theurgists says.

Fragment 226 des Places (dubious) = p. 9 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*., III. 131, 23–30 Diehl)

> [A]nd the theologians teach us these things as well whenever they say about each (cosmic order) that, prior to daemons, there are gods in them, granting authority to each (god) according to (each) different (part of the cosmos) *** for instance, concerning our queen, the Moon, they say that there are some goddesses in her: Hecate and Artemis. And concerning King Helios and the gods up there the theologians praise the higher Dionysus with hymns as:
>
> > **Coadjutor of Helios, looking upon the holy, celestial pole.**

The visible sun plays a fundamental role in Proclus' philosophy,[43] and its importance is reflected in the number of oracular sayings that he quotes to elucidate his views on it. The first Proclean passage considered, where fragment 59 des Places appears, is of particular importance since in it Proclus distinguishes between the visible sun and the hyper-cosmic one, which in the *Cratylus* Commentary he identifies with Apollo, of whom the visible sun

will then be an inferior manifestation.[44] The 'harmony of light' mentioned by fragment 71, quoted by Proclus over the course of his discussion of the etymological meaning of the name of Apollo,[45] further confirms the strong relationship this god has with the sun, regarded as his visible image.[46] There exists then two suns for Proclus, one visible to the eye, the other invisible and identifiable with the god Apollo.

An illustrious Neo-Platonic antecedent to this Proclean doctrine can be found in Julian the Emperor's hymn *To King Helios*, which however seems to admit not two but three suns: the intelligible one, identified with Plato's Good; the intellectual one, mediator between the intelligible and the material dimensions and, finally, the visible one.[47] But it must be said that Proclus as well[48] compares the visible sun, called 'Channel of fire (πῦρ πυρὸς ἐξοχέτευμα) and dispenser of fire' (πυρὸς ταμίαν) by fragment 60 des Places, with other two principles that communicate their light to inferior orders of beings (though he did not call them 'suns'): the Orphic Phanes (that for him coincides with both the Platonic Living Being and the third member of the third intelligible triad), who illuminates the intellectual dimension; and Zeus (identified with the Platonic Demiurge), who sheds his intellectual light on the hyper-cosmic gods. H. Lewy is convinced that the doctrine of the two suns is Chaldean, but this could be regarded at best as a probable hypothesis given the absence of oracular fragments that explicitly support it.[49] The mediating function of the sun that Julian the Emperor so much emphasized is also stressed by Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*[50] where he, 'conforming to what has been revealed by the gods' (ἕπομαι μὲν τοῖς ἐκ τῶν θεῶν πεφασμένοις), abandons the Platonic conception of the planetary hierarchy (which does not put the sun in central position but right above the moon)[51] to follow fragment 58 des Places, which places the sun 'in the place of the heart' (κραδίης τόπῳ) (that is, in the middle of the universe, which is compared here with the human body, the centre of which is the heart) as well as fragment 168, which defines the sun as 'the triple-winged Principle' (τὴν τρίπτερον ἀρχήν), that is, as surrounded on each side by three planets.[52] This doctrine of the *Chaldean Oracles* is also accepted by 'The Theurgist', a possible reference to Julian the Theurgist, of whom Proclus quotes a passage from one of his lost works where he makes use of the Chaldean word ἐμεσεμβόλησεν or 'intercalated' (= fragment 200 des Places) to stress the central position of the sun among the other six planets.

Concerning fragment 167, R. Majercik[53] has demonstrated that it must be referred to the sun, not to the earth as Lewy did,[54] since the Proclean reference to the centre must be interpreted in the light of fragments 58, 168 and 200 that clearly refer to the sun's position at the centre of the universe. The same author has also shown that for Chaldean doctrine, the rays of the sun had both a physical and an anagogic function, since it is through them that the theurgist accomplished his return to the divine dimension during two theurgical rituals described by Proclus: the 'ἀπαθανατισμός τῆς ψυχῆς' or 'immortalization of the soul', in which the soul's two vehicles, pneumatic

and luminous,[55] were purified and 'drawn upward by the aerial, seleniac and heliac rays';[56] a ritual in which the theurgist's body was buried except for his head to ritually symbolize the act of transcending material corporeality in order to achieve the 'epoptic vision' (the supreme vision of the Eleusinian Mysteries)[57] and be 'filled with intelligible light' (πλήρεις ὄντες τοῦ νοητοῦ φωτός).[58]

With regard to the position of the sun in correlation to the other planets, Proclus interprets fragment 61 des Places, probably made up of a collection of passages from different oracular sayings, in the sense that the fragment places the sun above the moon and this in turn above the air, in accordance then with Platonic physics, which he had abandoned in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic* to replace it with Chaldean doctrine; there he had pointed out that, though scientifically indemonstrable, the Chaldean conception must be preferred to the Platonic one, which, being in accordance with the astronomy of Plato's times,[59] must not necessarily be followed now. In this case, we have a proof of how Proclus' respect for oracular doctrines was sometimes in conflict and not always in agreement as he repeatedly tried to demonstrate, with his strong adherence to Plato's philosophy.

R. Majercik[60] correctly points out that verses 8 and 9 of fragment 61 refer to the vehicle of the soul constituted of ethereal, solar, lunar and aerial elements, the so-called 'astral body' acquired by the soul when it descends to the material world; in support of her interpretation, this author quotes Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, III, 234, 26–30 Diehl.

The last fragment quoted has been judged by des Places to be dubious, and with good reason since Dionysus does not appear in any of the extant Chaldean fragments.[61] It could be probable that it is Orphic, as Lewy suggested.[62] The fragment is however important since it points out the divine nature of celestial bodies, which, considering the other fragments quoted in this section, was with all probability also accepted by the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*.

3.9 The sky

Fragment 69 des Places = p. 35 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 286, 9–13 Diehl)

> [G]enerally speaking, the universe also has a body (*Timaeus* 28 B 8 Burnet); in order for you to understand the intermediate and perfect nature of the cosmos that Oracle again says:
>
> > **For it comes into existence as a copy of Intellect, but since it has happened (to be), it possesses something of a body.**

In commenting on this fragment, Majercik rightly says: 'Although Proclus . . . equates ὁ οὐρανός with ὁ κόσμος (based on his interpretation of Plato, *Tim.*, 28 B), in the *Oracles*, "sky" is more properly the region of the fixed stars or

the ethereal realm'.[63] The sky is said by the fragment to be a visible image of the Intellect and to possess 'something of a body' (τι σώματος), showing how in this case Chaldean cosmology clearly falls within the confines of coeval Platonism.

3.10 The movement of the fixed stars and the planetary revolutions

Fragment 64 des Places = p. 34 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, III. 124, 24–29 Diehl)

> [A]nd even long before them the Chaldeans (and, prior to their own observations, they were taught by gods) entertained the same opinion as Plato on the motion of the fixed stars, for the *Oracles* speak not once but many times of the forward movement of the fixed stars:
>
> **The course of the Moon and the forward movement of the stars.**

Here in this fragment, Proclus makes use of the *Chaldean Oracles* to give a 'divine' confirmation of Plato's theory according to which the fixed stars have a forward motion only, while the planets both a forward and retrograde movement.[64]

Notes

1 On this, see Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 331–332. We do not agree with Lewy, who writes that in Chaldean doctrine (ibid., 331) 'the personal concept of God prevails over the metaphysical', but we think that for the authors of the Oracles these two dimensions coexisted harmonically, without the one prevailing over the other.
2 See also ibid. 331.
3 *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 802, 8–11 Cousin.
4 Ibid., 802, 15–22 Cousin.
5 The same interpretation of this fragment is proposed by H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 68–69.
6 According to H. Seng, 'source' is not a technical term of the Chaldean Oracles, even if it will be used in this sense by Neo-Platonists; see id., *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 69. On the identity of ἀρχή ('principle') with πηγή ('source'), see ibid., 69–71.
7 See fr. 108 des Places.
8 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 127. R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 150, follows des Places.
9 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 106 and note 165.
10 P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 261 and notes 1–3.
11 Ibid., note 3.
12 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III. 22, 81, 11–20 Saffrey–Westernik.
13 For this section, we are indebted to P. Hoffman's indispensable study entitled *Eros, Alètheia, Pistis . . . et Elpis*, in Seng–Tardieu, *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel* (2010), 306–319. The article describes the history of the triad Faith–Truth–Love from Porphyry onwards and advances the thesis according to which this triad was originally a tetrad (inclusive of Hope as well, as one can find in Porphyry's *Letter to Marcella* [Porphyry, *Πρὸς Μαρκέλλαν*, W. Pötscher ed. (Leiden, 1969)],

24, 5–6), turned into a triad by Proclus; see ibid., 255–306; 323–324. The author's thesis is fascinating but, in our opinion, weakened by the fact that there is no Chaldean fragment where Hope, Love, Truth and Faith are mentioned together in this order (which for Hoffmann was the original one [see ibid., 265], before being modified by Iamblichus first [ibid., 287–294], who established the order Love, Hope and Faith [Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, V. 26, 26–41 des Places], then by Proclus, and finally by Simplicius, who proposed the triad Sympathy – Faith – Hope [id., *Simplicii In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria* 5, 10–21 Diels; see also ibid., 301–306]). Of course, the possibility that here Hope could have a function which has nothing to do with the triad cannot be excluded. Probably the best solution would be not to regard Hope as a stable member of the triad but as a possible addition to it in certain contexts, which would imply that we are not dealing here with a rigidly fixed Chaldean doctrine.

14 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 135 and note 260, who is followed by both des Places (id., *Oracula chaldaica*, 130) and Majercik (id., *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 156).

15 On them, see for example Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 2, 10, 15–25–11, 5–25 Saffrey–Westernik.

16 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 156 where she refers to ibid., 155.

17 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 105, 54, 15–109, 59, 25 Pasquali.

18 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 153–154. He is followed by R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 168.

19 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 196–197.

20 R. Majercik, see id., *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 168.

21 The word *synthemata* (συνθήματα) can mean 'passwords' but also 'signs', and it is in this second sense that is generally used in literature as a synonym of 'symbols'.

22 É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 206–207, 5–20 = J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, V, 192, 12–25.

23 See also Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 108, 25–30 Kroll. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, I. 210, 19–26; 301, 19–20 Diehl (τά τε ἄρρητα καὶ τὰ ῥητὰ συνθήματα τοῦ κόσμου, δι' ὧν συνάπτεται τῷ Πατρί).

24 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, I. 210, 25–30 Diehl; 215, 20–25; 273, 10–20 Diehl.

25 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, II. 8, 56, 16–19 (even if in this case Proclus is linking the Chaldean doctrine with the One, not with the paternal Intellect). Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, II. 247, 29–31 Diehl.

26 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 39, 16–17 Kroll.

27 Ibid., I. 198, 14–24 Kroll.

28 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 191 and note 55; see also 192. Proclus, *De sacrificio et magia*, in J. Bidez, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, vol. 6 (Brussels, 1928), 150, 19–151, 5. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, I. 5, 24, 4 Saffrey–Westernik.

29 É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 206, 21 = J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, 192, 26. Proclus, *De sacrificio et magia*, 150, 17; 151, 1 Bidez. Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 51, 19, 12; 71, 31, 4, 25; 113, 65, 18; 71, 30, 8, 21; 72, 33, 27; 169, 93, 25 Pasquali.

30 On Iamblichus' defence of the *voces mysticae* or *magicae* against Porphyrian criticism, see C. Addey, *Assuming the Mantle of the Gods: Unknowable Names and Invocations in Late Antique Theurgic Ritual*, in Lardinois–Blok–van Der Poel, *Sacred Words* (2011), 279–294. G. Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (Pennsylvania, 1995), 21; 48–50; 84–85; 110; 162. With regard to theurgy in both Porphyry and Iamblichus, see also C. Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (Abingdon, UK–New York, USA, 2014).

31 J. F. Finamore, Plotinus and Iamblichus on Magic and Theurgy: *Dionysius* 17 (1999) 93–94. See also M. Zago, *"Non cambiare mai i nomi barbari" (Oracoli Caldaici, fr. 150 des Places)*, in Seng–Tardieu, *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel* (2010), 109–143.
32 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 192.
33 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, I. 210, 10–20 Diehl.
34 Ibid., I. 450–451 Diehl.
35 Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, II. 206, 89, 6–8 Ruelle.
36 Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 151, 9 O'Meara. H. Lewy thinks that the 'Source of Sources' is to be identified with the paternal Intellect: see id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011) 118, while Seng follows Psellus: id., *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 92.
37 The same expression is used in fragment 134, 1 des Places.
38 With regard to the action exerted by the Ideas on matter see H. Seng, *Un livre sacré de l'antiquité tardive* (2016), 92.
39 On Proclus' concept of matter see G. van Riel, *Proclus on Matter and physical Necessity*, in Chiaradonna–Trabattoni, *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism* (2009), 231–255; see especially 238 (on the weakness and receptivity of matter), 240 (on the difference between formless matter and matter endowed with a minium degree of form on which the Demiurge operates), 243–245 (on the ἄποιον σῶμα, a second material substrate after formless matter, deprived of quality but possessing quantity), 246–247 (on a third 'substrate' or ὑποκείμεονον endowed with quality and above the ἄποιον σῶμα). See also G. van Riel, Horizontalism or Verticalism? Proclus vs Plotinus on the Procession of Matter: *Phronesis* 46 (2001) 128–153.
40 On this fragment see also Michael Psellus, *Opuscola psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*, 151, 8–15 O' Meara. With regard to the creation process initiated by the Demiurge, see J. Opsomer, *Proclus on Demiurgy and Procession: A Neoplatonic Reading of the Timaeus*, in Wright, *Reason and Necessity* (2000), 118 (on the Demiurge as Father and his identification with Zeus); 122, 125 (on the difference between the Demiurge and other inferior demiurgic entities).
41 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 120. See also P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (1968), 396. M. Tardieu, *La Gnose Valentinienne et les Oracles Chaldaïques*, in Layton, *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (1983), 204 ff.
42 The term 'Χαλδαϊκός' (Chaldean) is also used by Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, II. 56, 21 Kroll.
43 On Proclus' astronomical conceptions, see L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (1996), 262–316.
44 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 174, 98, 1–5 Pasquali.
45 Ibid., 174, 96, 10–176, 103, 5 Pasquali.
46 See also Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 1044, 4–12 Cousin.
47 Giuliano Imperatore, *Hymnus Helii Dei*, in *Alla madre degli dei e altri discorsi*, Carlo Prato ed.–A. Marcone trans., 7th ed. (Milan, 2006), 3, 3–5, 104; 5, 15–16, 17–21, 106; 6, 1–17, 106–108; 10, 1–5, 112; 13, 10–18, 120; 16, 17–21, 124; 18, 7–10, 128; 43, 1–6, 162–164.
48 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III, 82, 32–83, 1–17 Diehl.
49 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 151.
50 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 220, 18 Kroll.
51 Plato, *Timaeus*, 38 C–D Burnet. On this, see also F. MacDonald Comford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London, 1935; reprint 1997), 105–137.
52 On this, see also É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 146–147 and R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 205 (who follows H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* [2011], 150 and note 309).

53 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 204.
54 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 96–97 and note 130.
55 On this, see M. Griffin, Proclus on Place as the Luminous Vehicle of the Soul: *Dionysius* 30 (2012) 161–186. An excellent exposition of the Proclean doctrine of the soul's vehicle can be found in E. R. Dodds, *Appendix II: The Astral Body in Neo-Platonism*, in Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, Dodds ed. and trans., 320–321; see also ibid., 313–320 for a summary of the views of Proclus' Neo-Platonic predecessors (Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus). An excellent study on the Iamblichean conception of the soul's vehicle is J. F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (Chico, 1985), 169 (where Proclus' position is described). See also C. van Liefferinge, *La théurgie des Oracles Chaldaïques à Proclus* (1999), 264. On the vehicles of the Soul in Proclus, see Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 234–238; 297–300 Diehl.
56 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 152, 7–19 Kroll.
57 On this, see V. Magnien, *Les mystères d'Éleusis* (Paris, 1938), especially 225–237.
58 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, IV. 9, 30, 24 Saffrey–Westernik. Concerning the two theurgical rituals mentioned here, see H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 184–200. C. van Liefferinge, *La théurgie des Oracles Chaldaïques à Proclus* (1999), 261; 271–273. J. Finamore, *Proclus on Ritual Practice in Neoplatonic Religious Philosophy*, in A. Kijewski ed., *Being or Good? Metamorphoses of Neoplatonism* (Lublin, 2004), 123–137. R. M. van den Berg, *Theurgy and Proclus' Philosophy*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 231–233. I. Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity* (2013), 207–214.
59 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 220, 17–18 Kroll.
60 Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 167.
61 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 226.
62 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 444.
63 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 169, following H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 125–126 and notes 225–227.
64 On this see R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 167.

4 Man and his destiny

4.1 The creation of man by the Father

Fragment 25 des Places = p. 46 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, III. 316, 7–10 Diehl)

> [A]nd this one must say about the young gods (*scil.* the planets; see *Timaeus* 42 D 5–6 Burnet), that they bring to perfection the creation of the Father, to which He gave substance by the very act of thinking, as the Oracle also says:
>
> **The Father thought these things, and gave a soul to a mortal.**

Fragment 94 des Places = p. 47 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 318, 16–18; 408, 19–20 Diehl)

> [C]oncerning Him (*scil.* the Demiurge) (the Oracles) also say these things, just as Timaeus (28 C 3–5 Burnet) does, for he placed:
>
> **. . . Intellect in soul, and in the body that lies idle**
> **the Father of men and gods placed us.**

Here Proclus intends to elucidate the Platonic conception of the creation of the human soul by the Demiurge through Chaldean teachings, which he correctly finds to be in harmony with Plato, given the influence this philosopher had had on the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*. Fragment 25 attributes the creation of man to the Father, who for Proclus is the Demiurge, but who could also be identified with the first member of the Chaldean triad.[1] Proclus believes that fragment 94 also refers to the Demiurge since it mentions the title 'Father of men and gods',[2] which Homer attributed to Zeus (for example, *Ilias* 4, 68 Allen) in turn identified with the Demiurge by Proclus. According to des Places, the Father creates through His own will,[3] but it would be better to say that He does so through His thinking activity, since the text of the fragment makes no mention of the Father's will. The same author, followed by Majercik,[4] links the first verse of fragment 94 with the World Soul, not the human soul: this could indeed be the case, but nothing prevents us to assume that the fragment refers to human souls as well since the 'we' (ἡμέας) of verse 2 seems to be a clear reference to them;

Majercik too hints at this possibility.[5] In the end, Proclus' use of both fragments appears to be in line with the principles of Platonic psychology.

4.2 The vehicle of the soul

Fragment 193 des Places = p. 32 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 144, 25–30 Diehl)

> We say these things being aware of all that (has been said) before, through which (we) have proved them. We have derived (our position) from the things that Plato said and not from our own inventions. Since those who have began from the *Oracles* will say that these souls too **ride upon** some hypercosmic bodies, whether ethereal or fiery.

Fragment 201 des Places = p. 47 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 5, 3–17 Diehl)

> [F]or individual souls that are established in it are assigned to (their) guiding gods, and become encosmic by virtue of their own **vehicles**, imitating their leaders, and mortal creatures are created and made alive by the heavenly gods. This is where (it) is considered in what way man came into existence and through which causes; and man (is) prior to all other (beings), either because the investigation about him is also particularly appropriate to us, as we set before ourselves the discussion about (the nature) of man and live in accordance with it, or because man is a micro-cosmos and those things that in him exist partially exist in the cosmos divinely and universally. For we have an actual intellect, and a rational soul that proceeds from the same Father and the same life-giving goddess as the cosmos, and an ethereal **vehicle** (which is) analogous to the heaven (for the World Soul), and an earthly body (composed of) the four elements, which is also co-ordinate to it.

To reconstruct the Chaldean doctrine of the soul's 'vehicle' or ὄχημα represents an almost impossible task for four reasons: 1) the limited number of authentic fragments where this is described (apart from those quoted previously, it appears only in fragment 120 des Places ['thin vehicle of the Soul' {ψυχῆς λεπτὸν ὄχημα}], a testimony from the Neo-Platonic philosopher Hierocles, who confines himself to saying that according to the Pythagoreans the vehicle of the soul must be subject to the purification process through the practice of virtues and the discovery of truth);[6] 2) the fact that the Neo-Platonists did not distinguish between the original Chaldean conception of the ὄχημα and their own views concerning it; 3) the fact that Proclus, as in the passage where fragment 193 des Places is quoted, attributes vehicles to the hyper-cosmic gods as well: we do not know whether this was a Chaldean doctrine as Proclus claims it to be or not; 4) the profound disagreement between Neo-Platonists on the nature of the soul's vehicle.

Proclus describes his predecessors' views summarily in book 5 of his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, III. 234–238 Diehl. He considers the following authors: Atticus and Albinus (to this group must be probably added Plotinus[7]), according to whom there is only one vehicle, the pneumatic, that does not survive the material body's dissolution;[8] Porphyry, who thinks that the pneumatic and astral vehicles are the same,[9] that the soul obtains it when it crosses the celestial bodies to descend to earth and that the vehicle returns to the heavenly dimension when the material body dies;[10] Iamblichus,[11] according to whom the vehicle is eternal, luminous (αὐγοειδές), made of ether as the heavenly bodies[12] and built by the Demiurge; Syrianus,'[13] whom Proclus follows, who believes that the pneumatic vehicle is built by the Demiurge, contains the irrational soul and can be regarded as immortal only in itself but not after it becomes the vehicle of a specific soul; in this case it lasts for a long time and can also be punished in Hades (which thing would have been impossible if both the irrational soul and its vehicle died together with the material body),[14] but in the end it dissolves.[15] In addition to the pneumatic vehicle, Proclus (and, we can assume, Syrianus) also believed in the existence of another one, also built by the Demiurge[16] but of a luminous nature.[17] This is made of ether and so immortal,[18] endowed with a superior form of perception[19] and connected with both the astral/pneumatic body which it traverses to come to earth[20] and the rational soul.[21] Again, we do not know whether Proclus derived the doctrine of the luminous body from the *Chaldean Oracles* or from other sources.

4.3 The material body

Fragment 143 des Places = p. 56, n. 2 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, I. 39, 17–22 Kroll)

> And it is clear that the Oracles as well wisely say to the theurgist that all gods are without body but that 'bodies have been given to them because of you' (fr. 142 des Places) since you cannot participate incorporeally in what is incorporeal given '**the corporeal nature on which you have been grafted**'.

Fragment 186 des Places = p. 48 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 95, 9–12 Kroll)

> [B]ut the River Lethe (represents) all flowing of material beings and **this tumultous vessel of ours** which always fills the souls with forgetfulness of perpetually stable principles.

Fragment 204 des Places = p. 48 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 336, 1 Kroll)

> [I]nside a body that '**disperses itself**'.

The entrapment of the soul inside the material body is well described by these three fragments. The first of them, which also contains fragment 142 des Places that we will discuss later, comes to the point of saying that

humans are 'grafted' on the body just like grafts on plants, showing the body to be an external accretion grown on the soul but fundamentally alien to it. But why is the material body so dangerous to the soul? Since, like the River Lethe, to which Proclus compares it, it has a 'tumultuous' (ῥόθιον) nature slave to the force of passions and constantly 'dispersing itself' (σκιδνάμενος), which 'fills the souls with forgetfulness of perpetually stable principles' (ἀεὶ λήθης ἀναπιμπλὰς τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀεὶ ἑστώτων λόγων), preventing it from remembering the divine dimension from which it came and to which it must return.

4.4 The liberation of the souls from their material costraints

Fragment 122 des Places = p. 53 Kroll (Proclus, *Exc. chald.*, 192, 14–19 Pitra = 206, 6–12 des Places)

> [B]ut how does the order of angels raise the soul? '**By**', (the Oracle) says, '**making the soul bright with fire**', that is, by illuminating it from every side and filling it up with immaculate fire which grants it (both) infallible order and the power of not being dispersed in the material disorder but of being reunited with the light of the gods.

Fragment 123 des Places = p. 53 Kroll (Proclus, *Exc. chald.*, 192, 16–20 Pitra = 206, 11–15 des Places)

> ([T]he angelic order) maintains the soul in its own place and prevents it from mixing with matter, '**lightening (it) with a hot breath**' and elevating (it) by (making it live) an uplifted life since the hot breath is what gives life.

Fragment 99 des Places = p. 48 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 99, 1–4 Kroll)

> ([T]hose souls) <which> even the gods say are turned around '. . . **to serve (generation), but having served it with an untamed neck** . . .' leave generation behind to go back up there.

Fragment 155 des Places = p. 60 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 77, 7–11 Kroll)

> [S]uch is the nature of the passions, which is not easily corrected and '**hard to bend**' by reason, '**and weighted from behind, and bereft of a share**,' so to speak, of reason, which is '**light**'.

Fragment 171 des Places = (Proclus, *Exc. Chald.*, 193, 16–18 Pitra = 208, 3–4 des Places)

> The Father guides us: (He) discloses ther ways of fire, '**so that we do not flow into a low stream because of forgetfulness**'.

We will return to these passages during our analysis of Proclus' treatise *On Chaldean Philosophy*. At this stage, we will confine ourselves to saying that the imprisonment of the human soul inside the material body is not its final destiny for the Oracles; on the contrary, the soul can escape its material constraints by having recourse to the help of angels as well as by enduring with patience the time spent in the material world, with the firm hope that one day its terrestrial exile will end, as fragment 99 des Places points out. Human will alone is not enough to achieve this goal; also important is the help of angels who, by illuminating the soul with their fire, make it remember its true divine origin, obfuscated by its connection with the material body and prevent it from rushing to the material disorder (εἰς τὴν ὑλικὴν ἀταξίαν), urging it instead to return to the divine dimension. The main obstacle to this objective as fragment 155 des Places and Proclus' illuminating commentary clearly point out are the passions (παθῶν φύσις), which share in the dark nature of matter (ἄμοιρος φωτὸς ὄντος) and are 'hard to' be 'bent' (δύσκαμπτος) by the light of reason. This is why the Oracles think that together with a strong will,[22] external help is also necessary, be it from angels, the gods themselves or, as in fragment 171, from the Father, to whom the Oracles seem to give here the role of providential saviour of the initiate. This is in turn a sign of the already-mentioned coexistence in the Oracles of a philosophical and devotional approach.

In these fragments, Proclus gives us precious testimony on the ascetic connotation of Chaldean spirituality, which came to it not only from its Platonic heritage but also from the general tendency of late antique religiosity to consider life in this world as an exile from man's true home in heaven.[23]

4.5 Metempsychosis

Fragment 160 des Places = p. 62 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 336, 27–337, 1–6 Kroll)

> But not only the Oracles teach that in the case of human souls the descent into irrational beings is against nature, saying: '**It is a lasting decree from the blessed that**' the soul of man '**returns to life among men, not beasts**', since the transmigration into (bodies) of beasts is the consequence of a criminal life; but even Plato establishes that such a way of animating (the body) concerns souls who did wrong things.

The problem of whether or not man's soul transmigrates into bodies of beasts had divided Platonists since the time of Plotinus. This philosopher thought that those who have been passive slaves of passions will be reborn as plants,[24] while those who consciously chose passions over reason will be reborn as animals.[25] Porphyry on the contrary strongly denied this and admitted that even those souls who did not live according to reason transmigrate into human bodies.[26] Proclus, differently from Porphyry, denies a

perpetual liberation of souls from the cycle of death and rebirth, saying that the souls of the best men can spend several life-cycles in the divine dimension, but after that time they will come back to earth.[27] Proclus, following Syrianus' teachings,[28] points out that all souls, even those of the best men, must descend at least one time for every world-cycle since if they always remained above, there would be no reason for them to descend at all. Coming now to the text of the fragment, this clearly accords with Porphyry's position, but Proclus' commentary on it ('since the transmigration into [bodies] of beasts is the consequence of a criminal life') leaves open the possibility that the Oracles also advocated the transmigration of evil souls into animal bodies, though this reading is not based on a literal interpretation of fragment 160 des Places. In this case, then, Porphyry's exegesis seems to be closer to original Chaldean doctrine than is Proclus'.

4.6 The soul's faculty of perception

Fragment 41 des Places = p. 65 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*. II. 300, 12–14 Diehl)

> [T]he term 'contact' indicates a distinct, immediate, knowledge established in accordance with a determined conception – '**thinking of the sensibles as capable of being touched**', one of the gods says.

Proclus is here commenting on Plato's *Timaeus* 37A2–7 Burnet, which concerns the creation of the World Soul and its involvement with both indivisible and divisible beings. Proclus interprets this Platonic passage in the sense that the Soul knows reality directly, without mediation. To further corroborate his exegesis, he quotes fragment 41 des Places, whose context, as Majercik has rightly pointed out, is obscure.[29] In particular, it is difficult to establish what the subject of 'thinking' (νοούσης) is. The feminine gender of this present participle could refer to the Soul, be it the World Soul, and, in this case, Proclus' interpretation would be faithful to the text, or the human one, which has a closer relationship with the sensible world. If the second alternative were correct, Proclus' exegesis would then be wrong, because he would have used a fragment concerning the human soul to explain the nature of the World Soul. In addition, the human soul does not know reality immediately, by virtue of a single act of intuition as in the case of the World Soul, but through the mediation of both the five senses and reason, so that it more probable that it is in reference to the latter that Proclus quoted fragment 41.

4.7 The 'gods" address to the initiate

4.7.1 Introduction

We have decided to group the following fragments together since, though different in their specific content, they share the common characteristic of

being direct instructions given by the 'gods' to either man in general or to the Chaldean initiate in particular, in which they urge both to leave the material world and its dangers and hurry up towards the divine dimension. It cannot be excluded that these fragments were answers to specific questions previously made to the 'gods' through the mediation of theurgists, who would then play the role of actual oracles like the Pythia of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, even if the context in which the Chaldean oracular pronouncements were given was not that of a public Oracle but of a private one, whose fruition was restricted to the followers of Chaldean religion.[30]

4.7.2 Fragments and commentary

Fragment 15 des Places = p. 15 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, I. 27, 26–29–28, 1–2 Kroll)

> If then we speak rightly, one must take hold of this axiom first: 'Every god is good', since the Oracles too bear witness to this axiom, in which, censuring the impiety of men, it is said: '**Have you not known that every god is good? Ah, wicked, sober-up!**'.

In commenting on Plato's *Republic* 379 B 1 Burnet, where it is stated that 'God is good' (ἀγαθὸς ὅ γε θεὸς), Proclus quotes fragment 15 des Places where this Platonic statement is also quoted. The oracular saying continues with an exortation to 'sober-up', that is, to come out of that state of forgetfulness which prevents man to remember that he does not belong to the world of becoming but to the divine dimension, to which he must then go back to fulfil his own destiny.[31] This exhortation seems not to be directed to the Chaldean initiates only, but to all men who, though wicked (ταλαεργοί), are still deemed to be capable of coming out of their material constraints. If this interpretation is correct, it would imply that the Chaldean doctrine refused any determinism and recognized that all men have the capacity of rejecting evil and choosing good.

Fragment 102 des Places = p. 49 and note 2 Kroll (Proclus, *Th. Pl.*, V. 32, 119, 9–12 Saffrey – Westernik)

> For the fountain of Nature is called the first Eimarmene by the Gods themselves.
>
> **You should not look upon Nature, for its name is Eimarmene.**

The 'fountain of Nature' to which Proclus here refers is of course Hecate/Rhea, one of the 'fontal' or intellectual gods as well as the source of any inferior form of life, including Nature.[32] This is presented like a sort of enchantress capable of tying the initiate to the world of becoming and making him subject to the action of the inflexible Necessity that governs it.[33] To break

the spell that binds him, the initiate is invited to not look upon Nature (μὴ φύσιν ἐμβέψῃς), that is, to divert his attention from the world of becoming by understanding its finite and impermanent nature, and focus it instead on the divine world that never changes. By doing so, Nature will not be able to exert any influence on him, who will then be free to achieve unity with the divine.

Fragment 116 des Places = p. 52 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*. 155, 88, 1–5 Pasquali)

> On which account he (*scil*. man) should be stripped naked of the flesh that has been put (on him) (*scil*. of the material body) as Odysseus (was stripped of his) ragged garments (*Od*. 22.1) and (should not) resemble any longer 'a wretched beggar' (*Od*. 16. 273), 'wrapping his rags about himself' (*Od*. 14, 512) out of the needs of the body.
>
> **For the divine is not accessible to mortals who think according to the body,**
> **But those who have managed to strip themselves naked hasten up on high,**
>
> As the Oracle says.

By quoting some passages from Homer's *Odyssey*, Proclus returns to discuss the obstacles the body puts to the initiate on his way back to the divine dimension. This time, though, it is not the body itself to be the obstacle that must be overcome, but the fact of thinking 'in bodily terms' (σῶμα). Man, Proclus says, must not carry around the heavy burden of his body like how Odysseus threw 'his rags about himself' when he feigned to be a beggar, but must, in the language of the Oracles, 'strip himself naked' of it since, by doing so, he will also be able to get rid of his tendency to think 'in bodily terms', that is, to know Being by moving from a concept to another to construct one or more heuristic arguments about it. This way of thinking, which we can identify with dialectical reasoning or διάνοια, ends up breaking the unity of Being by dividing it into a multiplicity of concepts and, in doing so, lowers it to the bodily/material dimension. On the contrary, Intellect (νοῦς) can preserve Being's unity intact since it knows it through a single, indivisible act of intellection or intuition (νόησις). Once man changes his thinking process from διάνοια to νόησις, he will then be free to 'hasten up on high' because no ever-changing multiplicity will obstruct his ascent to Being and, above this, to the absolute oneness of the First Principle.[34]

Fragment 135 des Places = v. 1: p. 55 Kroll (Proclus, *In Alc*. 39, 16–17–40, 1–7 Westernik; v. 2: Paris. Gr. 1853, fol. 68 r°, ed. H. D. Saffrey, *Revue de Philologie* (1969) p. 67–68; v. 3: p. 55 Kroll = Proclus, ibid., 40, 7 Westernik and Paris. Gr. 1853, ibid.)

> [A]nd in the holiest of mysteries before the arrival of the god there happen attacks and apparitions of some chthonic daemons, which throw

> the initiates into confusion and drag them away from immaculate goods while inviting (them) to matter. Therefore the gods prescribe (us) not to look upon them before we have been fortified with the powers derived from mystic rites:
>
> > **Because you must not look upon them before (your) body has been initiated**
> > **Being terrestrial, these irksome dogs are shameless.**
>
> On account of which the Oracles add that,
>
> > **by charming souls, they are leading them away from initiations.**

We will come back to the topic of evil daemons later in this chapter. One of the important aspects to point out here is that Proclus explicitly regards fragment 135 as an exortation from the gods (θεοὶ παρακαλεύονται), which confirms our assumption that some oracular fragments had this specific connotation. The oracular saying warns the initiate not to look upon terrestrial (χθόνιοι) daemons, disparagingly called 'dogs' (κύνες), since they have the power 'to charm the soul, leading it away from initiations' (τὰς ψυχὰς θέλγοντες ἀεὶ [τῶν] τελετῶν ἀπάγουσιν). This exhortation from the gods reminds us of a similar instruction given by fragment 102 des Places, where the inititate was told to not 'look upon Nature' (μὴ φύσιν ἐμβέψῃς), for it can entrap him within the realm of Eimarmene or blind Necessity.

The mention of 'initiations' (τελεταί) made by this fragment shows that Chaldean religion was based on one or more initiation rituals that, we can only make assumptions here, could in part resemble those practised for example in the Eleusinian mysteries, in the Isis and Osiris mystery cult or in the Mythraic mysteries.[35]

Lewy believes the initiation rite the first verse of the fragment alludes to consists in a lustration ritual; this aims at purifying the non-initiate from those material elements of his being which the daemons can exploit to entrap him in the realm of matter where Eimarmene/Necessity rules. In this regard, Lewy[36] quotes a passage from Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*[37] that is worth citing here and where two different categories of theurgists are mentioned: the 'summoners' (κλήτορες), who invoked the gods, and the 'receptors' (δοχεῖς), who became their material receptacle after being possessed by them:

> For, as Timaeus says (22 C Burnet), the gods purify the universe either with fire or with water, which things seers too imitate. Because of these things theurgical rites prescribe to purify 'summoners' and 'receptors' first by these means, and purificatory rites are performed before initiations not only for seers but also for initiates, thereby rejecting everything foreign to the initiation to be performed.

We will go back to theurgical rites and their ministers. The important aspect of this passage is that, according to it, not only those to be initiated needed

to be purified, but also ministers of the Chaldean cult, and this notwithstanding they had already been purified when they were initiated into Chaldean religion for the first time. How to interpret this information? Probably in the sense that people who were already initiated like 'summoners' and 'receptors' had to be subject to purificatory (καθαρμοὶ) rites any time they performed a cultic act. From what Proclus lets us assume, both water and fire were used in these purification rituals, even if we do not know how. Such an emphasis on catharsis clearly shows how important it was for these initiates to be pure from polluting forces, like the influence of evil daemons or corporeal passions, which in turn is a clear sign of the ascetic connotation of Chaldean religion.

Fragment 136 des Places = p. 56 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm.*, 990, 21–29 Cousin)

> For in the case of both (philosophical) speculation and theurgy, what makes our ascent safe and infallible is this: to progress in an orderly way. As the Oracle says:
>
> > **For no other reason does God turn (Himself) away from man,**
> > **And with living power sends (him) off on empty paths**
>
> than when (we approach) the most divine objects of contemplation or action disorderly and wrongfully, and, as the saying goes, with uninitiated mouth or unwashed feet.

This warning from the gods is directed to, on the one hand, those men who approach the divine 'with uninitiated mouth or unwashed feet' (ἀμυήτοις στόμασιν ἢ ἀνίπτοις ποσὶ) – that is, without being subject to the initiatory and purificatory rites mentioned before; on the other hand, to those people who try to reach the divine dimension 'disorderly and wrongfully' (ἀτάκτως καὶ πλημμελῶς) since their ascent does not follow a precise plan (which we can assume was communicated to the initiate during or immediately after the initiation process). In all of these cases, God turns his back on man and guides him 'on empty paths' (κενεὰς ἀταρπούς); that is, He makes him believe that the path he is following will lead him to the divine dimension even if it goes in the exactly opposite direction. This clearly anthropomorphic representation of divinity shows again that the authors of the Oracles attributed human traits to metaphysical principles, since for them devotional and philosophical dimensions coexisted harmoniously instead of being in contrast with each other.

Fragment 140 des Places = p. 56 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 212, 12–18 Diehl)

> It is therefore necessary that he who has nobly undertaken the (practice of) prayer should make the gods propitious and awaken in himself the notions of the gods, since the kindness of the good ones is the primal

> incentive of participation in them. He (who prays) should be incessantly occupied with divine worship, **For in the case of the mortal who delays (praying), the blessed ones are swift (to punish)**.

The god's warning against those who neglect prayer is introduced by Proclus at the end of his description of his own doctrine of prayer.[38] This must have certainly been influenced by the *Chaldean Oracles*, but it is not possible to establish in which way this happened since fragment 140 des Places is the only extant fragment where prayer is implicitly mentioned. Proclus, who was also influenced by Iamblichus,[39] presents a theory of prayer that divides it into five progressive degrees: 1) 'knowledge' of the divine ranks (ἔννοια), necessary to know the right manner in which to approach the gods; 2) 'similarity' (οἰκείωσις) to the divine, obtained through the practice of virtues (Proclus considers the following: 'complete purity, chastity, education and ordered disposition'); 3) 'touching' (συναφή) the divine with the summit of the soul, that 'flower of the soul' or 'one of the soul' which Proclus describes in his treatise *On Chaldean Philosophy*;[40] 4) 'approaching' (ἐμπέλασις), which is a development of the third degree insofar as it implies a greater participation in the gods; 5) 'unification' (ἕνωσις), where the union of the 'one of the soul' with the 'one of the gods' is finally achieved.

What we are dealing with here is Proclus' philosophical systematization of the original Chaldean doctrine of prayer, but it is difficult to say to what extent the latter is reflected by the former. In another passage of his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*,[41] Proclus explains the power prayer has of leading man back to the divine dimension by referring to the Chaldean doctrine according to which the Father's Intellect sowed the symbols of the gods in every soul destined to come down on earth (fragment 108 des Places). According to Proclus, prayer activates the power of *symbola* and *synthemata* that lays dormant within the soul and, by doing so, contributes to the *epistrophe* or 'conversion' of the soul to the divine, which thing would have been impossible for the Soul to do if there were no trace of the divine left in it.[42] It is worth quoting a section of this passage from the *Timaeus* Commentary[43] in its entirety:

> And prayer gives a great contribution to this very *epistrophe* through the ineffable symbols of the gods, which the Father of souls sowed into them. It attracts the beneficence of the gods towards itself and unifies those who pray to those to whom they pray, joins together the intellect of the gods to the words of those who pray, moves the will of those who perfectly contain all goods in themselves to communicate them without envy, it is creator of divine persuasion and establishes all that we have in the gods.

Proclus' systematization was in all probability based on Iamblichus', who, however, coming closer to the probable simplicity of original Chaldean doctrine, admitted only three degrees of prayer: 'bringing together' (συναγωγόν)

of he who prays and he who is prayed, which includes Proclus' third and first degrees, that is 'touching' (συναφή) and 'knowledge' (ἔννοια) (Iamblichus uses the term γνώρισις); 'communion' (κοινωνία) with the gods, which probably must be linked with the fourth Proclean degree; and 'unification' (ἕνωσις) with the divine dimension.[44]

Only assumptions can be made with regard to the original Chaldean doctrine of prayer. Probably it was much simpler than the formulations of it proposed by both Proclus and Iamblichus, but it can be hypothesized that it included the concepts used by these two philosophers in their discussions on the nature of prayer, since they seem to be technical terms belonging to Chaldean vocabulary.

Fragment 217 des Places (dubious) (Proclus, *In rem p.*, II. 126, 15–17 and 23–26 Kroll)

> [B]ut it is clear that the Oracle teaches these things:
>
> > **All indeed have a sweet longing for being always in the Olympus as companions of the immortal gods. But not for all it is licit to set foot on those mansions.**
> >
> > **Not he who has focused his will on (investigating) entrails (of animals), after the dispersion of this body, will hasten to the Olympus and be lifted above on the light wings of the soul, but only he who . . .**

This fragment, that Lewy believed to be authentic,[45] has been shown by Dodds not to be so.[46] Actually the extant Chaldean fragments make no mention either of the Olympian gods or of Mount Olympus (which, of course, does not imply that they did not mention them in fragments that have not come down to us). This one, however, shares with fragment 107, v. 8 des Places the same negative opinion of divination through the inspection of animals' entrails, which could probably suggest that, if not Chaldean, it comes from a cultural milieu very close to that of the Oracles. The Proclean context where it is quoted,[47] a commentary on Plato's *Republic*, 614 B 7–C 2, does not help us to attribute it to a specific religious group, so the question of its provenance must remain open.

Fragment 105 des Places = p. 64 Kroll (Proclus, *Exc. Chald.*, p. 193, 24 Pitra = 208, 19 des Places)

> [I]t is in it (the material creation) that one must abandon jealousy and envy, from where (one) has chosen these things, since, being material, they have matter as nurse. But '**not to quench in your own mind**' has been said (in the sense of) shutting (oneself) out (of passions) and not (as an advice on causing) (their) destruction.

Here the gods exhort the initiate not to try to extinguish his own passions, since, as Proclus explains, they will exist until he will belong to the world of

becoming; on the contrary, the initiate must 'shut himself out' (ἀπόκλεσιν) of them, which means that he needs to divert his own attention from passions to the contemplation of the divine; by doing so, he will prevent them from taking root in his mind and making him their slave. Deprived of the power that human consciousness gives them, passions will tend to disappear in the same way in which they have entered the consciousness' spectrum. The 'gods' are then perfectly aware of a fact that modern psychology has clearly established: any attempt to repress passions and desires is doomed to fail because this makes them stronger, not weaker. On the contrary, by shifting his attention away from passions and towards the contemplation of the gods, the initiate becomes capable of preventing them from exerting any negative influence on him.

Fragment 111 des Places = p. 51 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, II. 312, 22–28 Diehl)

> The (words) 'running easily' (refer to) what is intellectual, whose change of position is unhindered, which changes position in a circular way, whose intellections are in the prime of strength, which is perfect, which operates on what is divine, which has the form of the Good (and) (is) around intelligible reality as the center by which it is borne along: **Urging yourself onward to the center of the clamorous light**, as one of the gods (says).

The protagonist of this fragment is the soul, which is said by Plato (*Timaeus* 37 C 1–3 Burnet) to 'run smoothly' when it is guided by the Circle of the Same (one of its fundamental components together with the Circle of Difference). In this condition, the Soul is constantly and without impediments focused on the intelligible dimension, the luminous centre towards which the gods urge it to return, in the same way in which the rays of a circumference must return to the centre from which they have departed. According to Lewy,[48] followed by des Places[49] and Majercik,[50] the 'center' mentioned by this oracular saying is the sun, but this interpretation forgets to consider the Proclean context where the fragment is quoted, which revolves around the intelligible dimension: this is the true centre of the Soul, from which it has been originated and to which it must return. It must be considered that the identification of the intelligible dimension with the centre and of the Soul with the circumference dates back at least to Plotinus,[51] and with all probability it is to this interpretation that Proclus is here referring. In addition, the fact that Proclus quotes fragment 111 des Places in this context may suggest that one of the first usages of this metaphor could be found in the *Chaldean Oracles* themselves.

4.8 The initiate's love for the gods

Fragment 43 des Places = p. 26 Kroll (Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* I, 2, 11, 8–16 Saffrey – Westernik)

> Being likewise a partaker of the dialectic of Plato, meditating on those immaterial energies which are separate from corporeal powers and desiring to contemplate by intelligence in conjunction with reason [true] beings, our auditor must genuinely apply himself to the interpretation of divine and blessed dogmas and fill his soul according to the Oracle **with profound love**; since, as Plato somewhere observes (*Symposium* 212 B 3–4 Burnet), for the apprehension of this theory 'a better assistant than love' cannot be obtained. (T. Taylor trans. with my additions and corrections)[52]

Fragment 45 des Places = p. 26 Kroll (Proclus, *In Alc.*, 117, 16–17 Westernik; *In rem p.* I. 176, 21–28; II. 347, 6–9 Kroll)

> It was thus, I think, that Socrates called it in the *Phaedrus* (254 E Burnet), and the Oracles (call) it '**a stifling of true love**.'
>
> Just as he (Socrates) says (*Phaedrus* 242 D Burnet) that he made a mistake in rebuking licentious love, which the gods address '**stifling of true love**', in that he turned to the farthest, material image of love, instead of contemplating that love which is divine and elevates souls, so in the same way he might say that Homer too made a mistake about Helen, since he brought the intellect of his soul down to the contemplation of the beauty that appears to the senses. . . .
>
> This is why the Oracles advise to be open to (the goods coming from above) through a life independent (from passions) as well as not to be closed (to this positive influence) as a consequence of attracting '**the stifling of true love**' instead of aiming at the All.

Although the desire to contemplate the divine dimension, the practice of dialectic and the meditation on the invisible forces that govern our world are necessary requirements for the true student of Plato, they would be useless without love, because, as Plato himself said in the *Symposium* (212 B 3–4 Burnet), for the man who truly wants to apprehend the divine there is no 'better assistant than love'. Although Proclus' strictly logical way of proceeding may at times give the impression of a rationalism that borders with spiritual aridity, it must never be forgotten that the love for God and the gods represents the ultimate drive of Proclus' philosophical enterprise. Fragment 43 des Places clearly shows this, while the other fragments quoted warn the initiate of the power passions have of 'stifling' (πνιγμόν) true love for the gods.

4.9 Hecate's apparitions to the initiate

4.9.1 Introduction

We have grouped these fragments together because they describe apparitions of the goddess Hecate happened during theurgical rites, which, we can

assume, were aimed at invoking this goddess.[53] These apparitions generally follow the traditional Hellenic iconographic representation of the goddess Hecate, showing how Chaldean religiosity, though deemed to be of foreign origin by Neo-Platonists, was imbued with the Hellenistic culture in which it flourished.

4.9.1.1 Fragments and commentary

Fragment 72 = p. 36 Kroll (Proclus, *Theol. plat*. V. 35, 130, 2–7 Saffrey – Westernik)

> And for these reasons it seems to me that Plato again said the same things that were later revealed (by the gods). And that which the gods (have called) 'armed from head to toe', Plato has honoured as 'equipped with full armour': (*Laws* VII 796 B 6–C 2 Burnet, where Plato refers to Athena instead)
>
> > **'For, I, the Divine, have arrived, armed from head to toe'**

Fragment 142 des Places = p. 56 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p*., II. 242, 9–12)

> [A]nd the gods say these things to the theurgists, for they say that, though being incorporeal,
>
> > **bodies have been bound to our self-revealed apparitions because of you.**

Fragment 145 des Places = p. 57 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat*., 71, 31, 10–15 Pasquali)

> This is why the gods advise us '**to contemplate the extended shape of light**'. For though it exists above without shape, through its procession it becomes endowed with form.

Fragment 146 des Places = p. 57 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p*. I, 110, 26–29–111, 3–11 Kroll)

> In all of these (*scil*. apparitions of the gods) the gods manifest many of their different forms, appearing in many of them. At one moment formless light is emitted from them then this acquires a human form and then it proceeds to some other shape. The mystical (doctrine) revealed by the gods has handed down these things, since this says:
>
> > **After making this invocation, you will see a stretched-out fire**
> > **like a child skipping across the swellings of the air**
> > **or again a shapeless fire from which a voice rushes forward,**

or ample light, whirring and rolling around a measure of land.
But (you might) also see a horse that is more brilliant than light
or a boy carried upon the swift back of a horse, a boy
in flames, or covered with gold, or once more naked,
or even standing on (an horse's) back and shooting a bow.

In the first of the fragments quoted, Hecate appears to the theurgist 'armed from head to toe' (πάντευχος ἐνόπλιος). According to Lewy,[54] this representation of the goddess emphasizes her frightening aspect, which Proclus also pointed out in his *Platonic Theology*, saying that the 'barbarians' (βάρβαροι) call her 'goddess terrible and fearful' (δεινὴν γοῦν θεὸν καὶ φοβεράν).[55] Of course, we do not know who these 'barbarians' really are, but it cannot be excluded that the philosopher is here referring to the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*, whom Suda's *Lexicon* considers to be of non-Greek provenance.[56] If this is the case, the quotation attributed to them by Proclus in the *Platonic Theology* could be an oracular fragment not included in des Places' collection as well as disprove Iles Johnston's criticism[57] of Lewy's attribution to Hecate of a frightening aspect, on the grounds that there is no oracular fragment that explicitly mentions it. Iles Johnston's interpretation of fragment 72 des Places, which explains Hekate's apparition 'armed from head to toe' as a symbol of the 'spiritual weapons' that the goddess provides the theurgist with, could also be correct since there is no doubt that Hecate was invoked with the objective of participating in her power, which could well be symbolized by her weapons. The parallels this author establishes between Hecate's weaponry as it is described in this fragment and the spiritual equipment that fragment 2 des Places says the theurgist must possess are indeed striking.[58] What is important for Proclus is the fact that Plato (*Laws* VII 796 B 6–C 2 Burnet) agrees with the Oracles in describing this goddess as wearing full armour, though the Platonic reference concerns Athena not Hecate.

The description of this goddess given by fragment 72 must not induce us to think that Chaldean spirituality was unable to transcend the anthropomorphic representation of the divine, since fragment 142 shows the exact opposite: the goddess says to the initiate that 'bodies have been attached to our self-revealed apparitions for your sakes' (σώματα τοῖς αὐτόπτοις φάσμασιν ὑμῶν εἵνεκεν ἐνδέδεται). The divine apparitions of the gods, and of Hecate in particular, in ways that conformed to the canons of traditional religious iconography did not reveal their true essence but were meant to meet the needs of human nature, which is forced to make use of sensory perception and rational inference to understand reality.[59] The fact that fragment 142 presents the manifestation of the goddess in human form as a concession she made to human weakness could imply that at this stage of his spiritual development, the initiate was unable to contemplate the goddess' real essence, so it was necessary for her to appear in a form that he could perceive with his senses and recognize inferentially as belonging to his religious background. This, however, did not prevent him from a contact with her, a

sign that Chaldean spirituality was flexible enough to cater for the needs of people at different stages of their spiritual development. But, at a higher level, the gods, as Proclus says in quoting fragment 145, 'recommend us to contemplate "the extended shape of light". For though it exists above without shape, it became shaped through its procession.' Now the goddess does not need anymore to appear in human form, but she can manifest herself as 'extended light' (fragment 145 des Places), that is, as light endowed with a geometric form. These types of apparitions, though superior to those in human form, are however still far from expressing the god's true nature. Only those that Proclus describes as 'light without shape' (ἀτύποτον φῶς)[60] truly express the supremely transcendent nature of the divine.[61]

As a consequence, Proclus distinguishes three different typologies of divine apparitions in the Chaldean system, from the lowest to the highest: 1) in human form; 2) as fire or light endowed with a specific shape; 3) as formless light. This multilayered aspect of Chaldean spirituality well served Proclus' exegetical purposes because, faced with Plato's criticism of Homer,[62] accused of representing the unchangeable gods with apparitions of different shape (be they anthropomorphic or not), Proclus answered that, 'The gods manifest many different forms of themselves, appearing in many of them' (οἱ θεοὶ πολλὰς μὲν ἑαυτῶν προτείνουσι μορφάς, πολλὰ δὲ σχήματα ἐξαλλάττοντες φαίνονται), though of course remaining the same because they appear different according to the different way in which inferior beings participate in them: it is not the deity that changes then, but our own way of perceiving it.[63] Among the forms chosen by the gods, the human one (τότε δὲ εἰς ἀνθρώπου μορφὴν ἐσχηματισμένον) suits those who are still bound to sensory perception but are nonetheless graced with the gods' presence, while the gods appear as 'formless light' (ἀτύπωτον φῶς) to those among the initiates who have learnt how to make use of the higher faculties of their soul, in particular *nous* or Intellect and, above this, the 'flower of the soul'.[64] Coming now to the analysis of fragment 146 des Places, according to Lewy[65] the deity invoked (ἐπιφωνήσας) here is none other than Hecate. The first two verses allude to the goddess' manifestation as a fire resembling a child skipping from one point to the other. While the manifestation of the goddess as a boy belongs to the anthropomorphic manifestations, her apparition as fire resembles the 'extended shape of light' (μορφὴν φωτὸς προταθεῖσαν) of fragment 145 des Places, which belongs to the median class of divine apparitions according to the Proclean categorization described earlier.[66] On the contrary, the 'shapeless fire' (πῦρ ἀτύπωτον) and 'abundant light' (φῶς πλούσιον) 'whirring and rolling around a measure of land'[67] (ἀμφὶ γύην ῥοιζαῖον ἑλιχθέν) mentioned by verses 3 and 4 respectively belong to the class of the highest manifestations of the divine.[68]

H. Lewy interprets verses 5–8, which mention a dazzling horse,[69] a boy on the back of a horse, a boy in flames or covered with gold or naked or again standing on an horse's back and shooting an arrow,[70] as a symbolic description of the souls of the dead who generally formed Hecate's entourage.[71] Iles

Johnston, however, rejects this interpretation, because it would not fit Hecate's celestial nature[72] in her quality as moon goddess.[73] However, we have seen above that Lewy's arguments in favour of the existence of a 'tenebrous side' of Hecate are based on scarce but seemingly solid evidence. In addition, Iles Johnston herself points out that since the beginning of Greek religion, Hecate was linked with the underworld as shown by the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, where this goddess accompanies Persephone during her journey into Hades.[74] But the goddess' connection with the souls of the dead characterizes Hecate's celestial aspect as well, since we know that for Plutarch (Iles Johnston quotes *De facie in orbe lunae*, 944 F Pohlenz[75]), after the demise of their body the souls must spend some time in the moon, a planet with which Hecate is linked, before being sent back to earth to animate a new material shell. Therefore, both authors' interpretations of the four final verses of fragment 146 des Places could be correct or partially so, without forgetting that we are here in the realm of mere hypotheses, since Proclus does not bother commenting on this oracular fragment, depriving us of precious information on its possible meanings (at least from his point of view). He confines himself to quoting it to show that not only Homer but the 'gods' as well said that the gods appear in different forms and that these can be traced back to the three categories mentioned before.[76]

4.10 The Chaldean way to the Father

4.10.1 Introduction

In this section, we have included those fragments that describe the spiritual methods employed by the Chaldean initiates to transcend their human limitations and reach the divine world.

4.10.2 Fragments and commentary

Fragment 9A Majercik (Proclus, *In Parm.*, VII, 58, 30–33 Klibansky-Labowsky, cf. p. 94; V. 2, p. 512, 94–97 Steel)

> [A]nd the gods indeed enjoin us to remove multiplicity from the soul and elevate our intelligence and lead it toward the One:
>
> > '**And do not keep back what is multiform in your mind**', they say, '**but extend the soul's thought towards the One.**'

Fragment 121 des Places = p. 53 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 211, 19–22 Diehl)

> After these is the 'approaching', for the Oracle calls it like this:
>
> > **For the mortal who approaches the fire will possess light (from the gods),**

promising us greater communion with the gods and a more distinct participation in their light.

Fragment 117 des Places = p. 52 Kroll (Proclus, *In Alc.*, 177, 6–10 Westernik)

The more powerful natural characters contemplate the truth by virtue of themselves and are more ingenious '**being saved through their own strength**', as the Oracle says, while the weaker characters need both instructions and reminders from others who possess perfection in those things in which they (are) imperfect.

Fragment 126 des Places = p. 53 Kroll (Proclus, *Th. pl.*, III. 1, 5, 12–16 Saffrey – Westernik)

[A]nd (*scil.* Plato's theology) showing the anagogic paths to Him (namely God), perfecting that intrinsic desire which souls always have of the Father and creator of all things and **enkindling that torch** in them (*scil.* the souls), by which they are especially united to the unknown transcendency of the One.

Fragment 130 des Places = p. 54 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.* III. 266, 14–23 Diehl)

From this it is easy to understand that according to Plato the souls are superior to Necessity as far as their highest life is concerned. For what the Father of the universe grants them is theirs by nature. Therefore, when they have contemplated the works of the Father,

They flee the shameless wings of fated Moira

As the oracle says,

They reside in the god drawing in the vigorous fires
Coming down from the Father, from which the soul that descends
Gains possession of the life-sustaining flower of fiery fruits.

Fragment 132 des Places = p. 55 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.*, 113, 67, 17–20 Pasquali)

Socrates now (396 C) points out that Hesiod omitted the entities prior to Uranus as being ineffable. Indeed, even the Oracles mentioned these entities as being ineffable, and added the words '**hold your silence, initiate**'.

Fragment 133 des Places = p. 55 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.* 176, 101, 5–10 Pasquali)

Therefore the theurgist too who guides this god's (*scil*. Apollo's) initiation begins from purifications and lustral sprinklings:

> **Let the priest himself when first directing the works of fire**
> **Be sprinkled with a cold douse of deep-roaring sea-water,**

As the Oracle says about him.

Fragment 139 des Places = p. 56 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*., I. 211, 8–13 Diehl)

Perfect and true prayer is performed like this: first there is knowledge of all divine orders to which he who prays comes near. For he (who prays) would not approach the gods appropriately if he did not know what is proper to them. On which account the Oracle too has prescribed that the '**fire-heated thought**' has the very first rank in holy religious worship.

Fragment 141 des Places = p. 56 Kroll (Proclus, *In Parm*., 1094, 17–21 Cousin)

For this expression 'come now' is able to act upon the soul and lead (it) upwards, forbidding us, as it were, to fall a sleep in face of the inquiry about to be undertaken, nor to approach (it) full of sluggishness, almost saying what has been said by the gods, (that is) that '**a release of the god is a sluggish mortal/who tends to these (divine dimensions)**'.

Fragment 190 (Proclus, *In Alc*. 188, 11–15 Westernik)

But that a certain knowledge of (these) matters is made possible in us by superior (beings) is sufficiently shown by the manifestations and guidances of the gods, which manifest the order of the universe to souls, go before and guide their journey to the intelligible (dimension) and 'kindle the fires', those that **lead upward**.

Fragment 196 des Places = p. 53 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim*., III. 300, 13–20 and 331, 6–9 Diehl)

To the removal of such vehicles, which Plato described by singularly naming each of their elements, the philosophical life also contributes, as he says himself, but in my opinion the telestic art contributes the most, by removing through divine fire all **stains** of generation as the Oracles also teach as well as that alien and irrational nature which the pneuma of the soul drew to itself.

The 'flood' strikes the pneumatic vehicle first and makes it heavier, for that is what receives the impression of **stains** and odours.

Fragment 202 = p. 52, n. 2 Kroll (Proclus, *Exc. Chald.*, 192, 10–15 Pitra = 206, 1–6 des Places)

> And the '**court open to all**' of the Father is the paternal order, which welcomes and embraces all souls that have been raised (to the divine dimension).

Fragment 210 = p. 66 Kroll (Proclus, *In Crat.*, 71, 35, 2–5 Pasquali)

> The '**chalcis**' was so called because of the clear and melodious manner of clanging brass. Doubtless the Chaldeans called it like this because they heard it from the gods. And the '**kumindis**' is among the smallest of birds.

Fragment 211 (dubious) = p. 9 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.*, I. 111, 28–112, 1 Kroll)

> '**The wretched heart of the recipient cannot bear me**,' says one of the gods.

It is only after our soul has consciously chosen not to cling to multiplicity that it becomes possible for it, in the words of fragment 9 A Majericik, to 'extend' the 'soul's thought . . . towards the One' (*anime noema in unum ampliare*). This fragment seems to be the appropriate continuation of fragment 9 Majercik[77] (demonstrated to be authentic by Saffrey but not included in des Places' collection) since in both the One is explicitly mentioned. What these oracular sayings want to say is that by moving away from the One, beings become more and more enmeshed in the realm of multiplicity, so that the initiate's main goal as fragment 130 says is to invert this process by abandoning multiplicity, where blind Necessity or Moira (which Proclus identifies with formless matter)[78] rules to go back to the perfect unity of the First Principle.[79] In order to do so the initiate must 'reside in the god' (ἐν δὲ θεῷ κεῖνται),[80] that is, establish himself in Him as much as he can and, once he has done so, 'draw in the vigorous fires coming down from the Father' (πυρσοὺς ἕλκουσαι ἀκμαίους ἐκ πατρόθεν κατιόντας). Majercik thinks that here fragment 130 could refer to a breathing technique in which the initiate imagined to draw in the solar rays (the sun is a symbol of the Principle) with each of his breaths.[81] But the fragment could also simply refer to a meditation on the nature of the Father, whom the *Chaldean Oracles* identified with the Primordial Fire, of which the visible fire of the sun was an inferior manifestation. The soul of the initiate can then 'gain possession of the life-sustaining flower of fiery fruits' (ἀφ᾽ὧν ψυχὴ κατιόντων ἐμπυρίων δρέπεται καρπῶν ψυχοτρόφον ἄνθος), that is, benefit from the power communicated to it by the Father, who will be like the water that makes the 'flower' of the initiate's soul blossom to achieve perfect unity with Him.[82]

Fragment 121 des Places is taken from Proclus' discussion about the stages of prayer. Here he is describing the fourth one, namely the initiate's 'approach' to the gods to set the right conditions for the final union with them. The specific context of this fragment must have been different from the one in which it is quoted by Proclus, since there is no proof that the *Chaldean Oracles* had established either five (Proclus) or three (Iamblichus) different stages of prayer, but its general meaning suited well Proclus' needs, since it helped him to show that the initiate's act of 'approaching' (ἐμπέλασις) the gods, which in the fragment are symbolically represented by the divine fire, resulted in him obtaining divine illumination from them. It is not excluded that what for the Oracles was a general exhortation to come closer to the gods by 'approaching' them in the right way was turned by Proclus into a specific stage of spiritual ascent, probably under Iamblichus' influence, where the ἐμπέλασις could be equated to the first degree of prayer.[83] The act of approaching the divine could, in the words of fragment 126 des Places, be equivalent to that of 'enkindling the torch' (ἀνάψασα πυρσόν) of one's own divine and ardent love for God, on whose rapid wings the human soul will be, as fragment 190 des Places says, 'lead upward' (ἀναγωγός) towards Him. According to Proclus' exegesis of this last fragment, it is the gods who urge man to transcend the miserable condition in which he finds himself, taking the initiative of human salvation (προκαθηγούμεναι δὲ τῆς πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν πορείας).

Another way of expressing the process of union with the divine is that chosen by fragment 139 des Places, quoted by Proclus in the context of his description of the first degree of prayer according to his own classification ('knowledge of divine orders' or ἡ γνῶσις τῶν θείων τάξεων). This oracular saying enjoins the initiate to develop a 'fire-heated thought' (τὴν πυριθαλπῆ ἔννοιαν) of the divine, which, given the symbolic nature that the element fire has in the Chaldean system, could well refer to a meditation on it as symbol of the First Principle. By following the method of spiritual ascent proposed by the *Chaldean Oracles*, the initiate is made capable of reaching the 'court open to all' (πανδεκτικὴ αὐλὴ) mentioned by fragment 202 des Places, which Proclus identifies with the 'the paternal order of the Father' (τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡ πατρικὴ τάξις) who welcomes the souls that have finally come back to Him from their terrestrial exile. Given the crucial role played by the Father in the Chaldean system, it seems that Proclus' interpretation in this case is in tune with the original meaning of the fragment.[84]

Concerning the extant Chaldean sayings of ritual content, we can consider fragment 132 des Places, who invites the initiate to 'hold' his 'silence'. Proclus uses this expression to explain why Hesiod said nothing about the divine entities that precede Uranus (the intelligible gods of his system). In this case, Proclus probably misinterprets the fragment by putting it in a context which does not strictly belong to it, since it is more probable that it refers to the fact that the secrets of initiation must not be divulged to non-initiates because they would be unable to understand them in the correct way.[85] The ritualistic

dimension of Chaldean religion clearly appears in fragment 133 des Places, where Proclus compares the purificatory powers attributed to Apollo to the lustrations that Chaldean initiates performed before starting cultual acts. This fragment says that before the 'priest' (ἱερεύς) starts 'the works of fire' (πυρὸς ἔργα), he must be subjected to a lustration rite performed with cold water and aiming at purifying his soul from those moral 'stains' (κηλῖδας) mentioned by fragment 196 des Places.

Judging from fragment 133 des Places, the ἱερεύς must have had the function of supervising the correct execution of the rites or, in the words of this oracular saying, of 'directing the works of fire' (πυρὸς ἔργα κυβερνῶν), where this element plays the role of symbol of the First Principle, the Primordial Fire. Another member of the Chaldean religious organization was the δοχεύς, a word that literally means 'recipient' but that des Places translates with 'medium'.[86] His function was to be possessed by the gods who then could communicate with the initiates through him. This figure is mentioned only once in des Places' collection and in a fragment (n. 211, preserved by Proclus) that the French scholar judged to be dubious. Des Places based his position on the fact that the term δοχεύς also appears in Porphyry's *Philosophy from the Oracles*, which contains oracular fragments that, contrary to Lewy's opinion,[87] were judged as non-Chaldean by Dodds,[88] and where this word is attributed both to human and non-human recipients of the god.[89, 90] Finally, in the extant Chaldean fragments there is no mention of the κλήτωρ or 'he who invokes the gods', whose function was probably that of calling on the gods to take possession of the δοχεύς.[91] All these three categories of initiates are instead mentioned by Proclus in this passage of his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*:[92] 'And the consecrated (priests), those who invoke the gods and the recipients made use of tunics and belts of many kinds, imitating the divine lives to which they referred their religious duties'. A passage already discussed[93] from Prolcus' *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus*[94] must also be considered, since it concerns the purification of both κλήτωρ and δοχεύς. To the latter does probably refer fragment 141 des Places,[95] which considers the situation when the δοχεύς' material tendencies prevents him from continuing to be possessed by the god, whose absolute purity and transcendence is of course incompatible with the slightest moral indignity.[96] In conclusion, notwistanding des Places' reservations on the Chaldean origin of the δοχεύς, we can assume that this, together with ἱερεύς and κλήτωρ, constituted the Chaldean religious hierarchy, of which unfortunately not more that what has been already said is known.

Although fragment 121 des Places points out man's finite nature by calling him 'mortal', it also exhorts him to approach divine fire directly (ἐμπελάσας), showing the Oracles' faith in the ability of the human nature to transcend its own limitations. Such a faith in man is also shown by fragment 117 des Places, which says that the initiates are 'saved through their own strength' (σωζόμεναι δι᾽ ἐῆς ἀλκῆς). As the Proclean context in which this fragment is quoted clearly explains, the fragment teaches that those who possess a 'powerful natural character' (καὶ τῶν φύσεων αἱ μὲν ἐρρωμενέστεραι) do not need to be urged by others to direct their attention towards the divine, being

naturally predisposed to do so, while weaker characters 'need both instructions and reminders from others who possess perfection in those things in which they (are) imperfect'. Lewy,[97] followed by des Places[98] and Majercik,[99] interprets the 'strength' (ἀλκή) mentioned by this fragment as a reference to the soul's divine spark, but, in the Proclean sources quoted in support of this exegesis,[100] there is no explicit equation between the two concepts, so that this must be regarded as a mere hypothesis.

The last fragment considered, n. 210 des Places, refers to the different possible designations of an unidentified bird whose Greek name 'χαλκίς' is associated by Proclus with the word 'brass' (χαλκός) and interpreted by Lewy as a reference to musical instruments used during Chaldean rituals;[101] lacking any further information, we are here in the realm of mere hypotheses. Nor is the Proclean context that explains how God-given names are smoother and fewer in syllables than those contrived by men[102] of any help in this regard, since it simply connects 'chalcis' (χαλκίς) with the first category, and 'kumindis' (κύμινδις) with the second.

4.11 Man between angels and daemons

4.11.1 Introduction

Here are included all Chaldean fragments quoted by Proclus that mention angels and daemons and the positive (in the case of the former) and negative (in that of the latter) influence they exert on man during his ascent to the divine realm.

4.11.1.1 Fragments and commentary

Fragment 137 des Places = p. 60 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.* II. 154, 17–19 Kroll)

> [H]e who lives a truly sacerdotal life, says the oracle,
>
> '. . . **shines (as) an angel living in power**'.

Fragment 92 des Places = p. 45 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.* III. 110, 3–5)

> Furthermore, in the case of divine things what (is said) 'watery' indicates the inseparable authority over water, which is why the Oracle calls these gods '**those who walk on water**'.

Fragment 114 des Places = p. 52 Kroll (Proclus, *Th. Pl.* V. 24, 87, 22–25 Saffrey – Westernik)

> The myth says that Prometheus, by honouring the human race and providentially taking care of our rational life in order for it not to perish

> by **being submerged in the furies of the earth** and the necessities of nature, as someone of the gods says . . .

Fragment 154 des Places = p. 59 Kroll (Proclus, *In Alc.*, 245, 6–7 Westernik)

> Beginning from below we must indeed shun the multitude of men who '**rush in herds**', as the Oracle says, and must not share either their lives or their opinions.

Fragment 156 des Places = p. 60 Kroll (Proclus, *In rem p.* II. 309, 10–11 Kroll)

> '**For they do not differ much from dogs without reason**', says the Oracle of those who lead a wicked life.

Fragment 170 des Places = p. 65 Kroll (Proclus, *In Tim.*, I. 121, 21–24 Diehl)

> What if the mountains in which the clouds form fell down because of the wind that strikes them from beneath the earth, by which the Oracle says **cities are destroyed together with men**?

The importance of angels for the ascent to God is well expressed by Proclus who, in explaining fragment 137 des Places, compares a priest that lives a truly sacerdotal life (ἀληθῶς ἱερατικός) to 'an angel' (ἄγγελος) who 'shines' (θέει) living in power' (ἐν δυνάμει ζῶν).[103] This is the only Chaldean fragment where angels are mentioned, so it is difficult to establish their precise role in the Chaldean system.[104] The connection that fragment 137 makes with light inevitably links the angels with the fiery, intellectual world, as well as with the Father. The Proclean context in which the fragment is quoted is an explanation of the Platonic myth of Er (*Republic* 10, 614–10, 621 Burnet) and mentions the angels insofar as it considers Er's soul as belonging to the angelic rank (εἰς ἀγγελικὴν τάξιν)[105] since he is the 'messenger' ('ἄγγελος' in Greek)[106] who will describe the afterworld to humanity.

Some 'shreds of information' on the angels can be glimpsed from Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, which says that both they and daemons are endowed with soul and intellect[107] but regards the latter as inferior to the former, so that a single angel can govern a multiplicity of daemons.[108] However, there is no proof that this conception of angels and daemons belonged to Chaldean doctrine as well.

With regard to evil daemons (but we do not have to forget that for Neo-Platonists there were good daemons as well),[109] the information at our disposal is slightly more extensive. Although fragment 92 is used by Proclus to describe the gods that rule over water, des Places rightly interprets it as referring to the watery daemons of fragment 91 (which also mentions those of air and earth).[110] The evil daemons are the external enemies of the initiate,

the inner ones being his own passions and desires which the daemons excite to make the initiate focus exclusively on the material dimension and forget the divine one. As said, the daemons were associated with the four elements of the material world, earth, water, fire and air. Those of the earth are explicitly mentioned by fragment 114, which regards them as 'furies of the earth' (χθονὸς οἴστροι) responsible for a sort of 'inverted' baptism, since they do not immerse man in purifying water but in polluting matter.[111] The fact of succumbing to the influence of daemons means becoming like the multitude of men who 'rush in herds' (fragment 154 des Places), guided as they are by passions instead of reason. In the words of fragment 156 des Places, evil daemons are like 'dogs without reason' because they are slaves to their irrational instincts, while those men who accept, willingly or not, to be ruled by them will end up being destroyed as completely as cities hit by an earthquake (fragment 170 des Places).[112]

Notes

1 Majercik seems to agree with this assumption: id., *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 151.
2 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 139. This author also refers to *Corpus Hermeticum*, X, 13 and XII, 13–14 Nock–Festugière.
3 Ibid., 127–128.
4 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 177.
5 Ibid. She also refers to Synesius, *Hymni*, 1(3), 564–568 Terzaghi.
6 Hierocles, *In aureum Pythagoreorum carmen commentarius*, F. G. Köhler ed. (Teubner, 1974), 26, 4–8. On Hierocles' views on the soul's vehicle, see I. Hadot, *Studies on the Neo-Platonist Hierocles*, M. Chase trans. (Philadelfia, 2004), 36–42.
7 E. R. Dodds, *The astral body in Neoplatonism*, in Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, E. R. Dodds ed. and trans., 318 who quotes Plotinus, *Ennead IV*. 3 (27), 24 Armstrong.
8 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 234, 10–15 Diehl.
9 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 318 Dodds.
10 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 234, 20–30 Diehl and E. R. Dodds, *The Astral Body in Neoplatonism*, in Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, E. R. Dodds ed. and trans., 318–319.
11 Ibid., 235, 1–10 Diehl and Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (1985), 167–168.
12 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, III. 14, 10 des Places.
13 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 237, 1–10 Diehl.
14 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 349, 5–10 Kroll.
15 Ibid., II. 300, 10–20 Kroll. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 238, 20–25 Diehl. With regard to the *pneuma* in Hermetic literature, see *Corpus Hermeticum*, X, 13 Nock–Festugière.
16 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 233, 25–30 Diehl. E. R. Dodds, *The astral body in Neoplatonism*, in Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, E. R. Dodds ed. and trans., 320
17 Ibid., II. 81, 20–21 Diehl.
18 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 208 Dodds. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 233, 32 Diehl.

19 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 154, 25–155, 1–10 Kroll. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 286, 20–30 Diehl.
20 Ibid., II. 162, 20–30–163, 1–10 Kroll. Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 209 Dodds. Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 822, 20 Cousin.
21 E. R. Dodds, *The Astral Body in Neoplatonism*, in Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, E. R. Dodds ed. and trans., 320; J. F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (1985), 169. See also J. Trouillard, Réflexions sur l'ὄχημα dans les Élements de Théologie des Proclus: *Revue des Études Grecques* 329–330 (70) (1957) 102–107.
22 R. Majercik (id., *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989]) points to Synesius as an ancient author who uses expressions very similar to those used by our fragment; see id., *Hymni*, 1(3), 523; 2(4), 289; 5(2), 88 Terzaghi. Id., *De Insomnis*, in *Synesii Cyreniensis opuscula*, N. Terzaghi ed. (Rome, 1944), 7, 45–47.
23 On this, see P. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA–London, UK, 1993), 55–101; id., *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1982). A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity* AD 395–600 (London–New York, 1993), 128–151. R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London, 1988).
24 Plotinus, *Ennead III*. 4 [15] 2, 1–5 Armstrong.
25 Ibid., 15–20 Armstrong.
26 Porphyry, *De regressu animae*, 300 Smith.
27 Proclus, *Elementa theologica*, 206 Dodds. See also A. Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neo-Platonic Tradition* (The Hague, 1974), 56–68.
28 *The Teachings of Syrianus on Plato's Timaeus and Parmenides*, S. K. Wear ed. and trans. (Leiden–Boston, 2011), *In Tim*. fr. 25, 208 = Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 278, 9–32 Diehl.
29 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles*, 159.
30 On this, see C. Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism* (2014), 21–23.
31 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 148 refers also to *Corpus Hermeticum*, I. 27; VII, 1; 2 Nock–Festugière and *The Gospel of Truth*, I. 22, 16–20 Attridge.
32 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 84 and note 66.
33 With regard to the identity between Nature and Eimarmene R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 180 quotes Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III. 271, 16–17 and Synesius, *Hymni*, I(3), 603–608 Terzaghi.
34 On this, see H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 170–173.
35 On Isis and Osiris cult, see L. Bricault, *Les cultes isiaques dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris, 2013); for an excellent collection of ancient testimonies on Hellenistic mysteries, see P. Scarpi–B. Rossignoli eds. and trans., *Le religioni dei misteri–Samotracia, Andania, Iside, Cibele e Attis, mitraismo*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Milan, 2004), 164–257.
36 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 227–228 and note 1.
37 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 176, 100, 20–25 Pasquali.
38 Ibid., I. 211 Diehl. On the topic of prayer in Neo-Platonism, the following book is fundamental: J. Dillon–A. Timotin eds., *Platonic Theories of Prayer* (Leiden–Boston, 2016), especially L. Brisson, *Prayer in Neoplatonism and the Chaldean Oracles*, in ibid., 108–133. See also R. M. van den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns* (2001), 86–91.
39 R. M. van den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns* (2001), 87.
40 J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, V. 195, 1–16 = É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, IV. 211, 1–15.
41 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 210, 30–211, 1–30 Diehl.
42 On this, see J. M. Redondo, *The Transmission of Fire: Proclus' Theurgical Prayers*, in Dillon–Timotin, *Platonic Theories of Prayer* (2016), 164–191.

43 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 210, 30–211, 1–8 Diehl.
44 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, 5, 26, 237, 12–13–238, 1–5 des Places.
45 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 31–33 and notes 88–93.
46 E. R. Dodds, *New Light on the Chaldean Oracles* (1961), 267, n. 17.
47 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 126, 1–15 Kroll.
48 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 195 and note 76.
49 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 140.
50 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 184.
51 See for example Plotinus, *Ennead VI* 9 [9] 1–10 Armstrong.
52 *On the Theology of Plato*, T. Taylor trans. (1816), 5.
53 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 246–247 and notes 67a–68.
54 Ibid., 95.
55 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, VI. 11, 53, 25–27 Saffrey–Westernik.
56 Suda, *Lexicon*, II. 433, 1 (Ἰουλιανός, Χαλδαῖος, φιλόσοφος) Adler. On the Oriental provenance of the authors of the Oracles, see also P. Athanassiadi, *The Chaldean Oracles: Theology and Theurgy*, in Athanassiadi–Frede, *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1999), 153–156.
57 S. Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteria* (1990), 127–128. See also ibid., 126 and note 43.
58 Ibid., 128–130; 133.
59 On this, see H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 246–247 and note 69. See also S. Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteria* (1990), 126 and note 43.
60 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I, 111, 28 Kroll.
61 On this, see Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 71, 31, 5–30 Pasquali as well as the following fundamental contributions by S. Iles Johnston: id., Fiat Lux, Fiat Ritus: *Divine Light and the Late Antique Defense of Ritual*, in M. T. Kapstein ed., *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience* (Chicago, 2004), 5–24. Id., Homo factor deorum est: *Envisioning the Divine in Late Antique Divinatory Spells*, in Bremmer–Erskine, *The Gods of Ancient Greece* (2010), 406–412, and especially 409, 412–413.
62 See books 2 and 3 of Plato's *Republic*.
63 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, I. 111, 15–25 Kroll.
64 Proclus, *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 195, 1–15 Pitra = 211, 1–15 des Places. On the fact that the quality of the gods's apparitions depend on the level of spiritual perfection of the initiate, see F. Gillon, *Les apparitions divines dans les Oracles Chaldaïques et selon Proclus*, in Lecerf–Saudelli–Seng, *Oracles Chaldaïques: fragments et philosophie* (2014), 157–160.

With regard to the theurgical ascent see S. Iles Johnston, *Rising to the Occasion: Theurgic Ascent in iIts cultural Milieu*, in P. Schäfer–H. G. Kippenberg eds., *Envisioning Magic: – A Princeton Seminar and Symposium* (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1997), 165–194. See also G. Luck, *Theurgy and Forms of Worship in Neoplatonism*, in J. Neusner–E. S. Frerichs–P. V. McCracken Flesher, *Religion, Science and Magic: In Concert and in Conflict* (Oxford, 1989), 192–204 as well as the interesting paper by L. Bergmann (id., *'Fire Walk with Me': an Attempt at an Interpretation of Theurgy and its Aesthetics*, in S. Mariev–W.-M. Stock eds., *Aesthetics and Theurgy in Byzantium* [Boston–Berlin, 2013], 144–197), who rightly points out the profound similarities existing between theurgical and sciamanic pratices (ibid., 150, 164, 172–173, 180) and where (ibid., 149–150 and note 38) she also opposes with good arguments I. Tanaseanu-Döbler's thesis according to which theurgy must be regarded as a Neo-Platonic development based on the text of the *Chaldean Oracles* (id., *Weise oder Scharlatane? Chaldaeerbilder der griechisch-römischen Kaiserzeit und die* Chaldaeischen Orakel, in Seng–Tardieu, *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel* [2010], 41).
65 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 241 and note 53, where he quotes especially *Papyri Graece Magicae*, IV, 2727 Preisedanz (δεῦρ᾽ Ἑκάτη,

τριοδῖτι, πυρίπνοα φάσματ᾽ ἔχουσα) and 2748 as well as other ancient testimonies. For a criticism of Lewy's position, see S. Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteria* (1990), 119–120 and note 20.

66 It seems to me that there is no textual ground to believe that this verse is describing an 'angelic apparition', as Iles Johnston suggests (id., *Hekate Soteria* [1990], 121–122, 125–126).

67 Iles Johnston's (ibid., 122) identification of this light with the Iynges based on the fragment's use of the verb 'to whir' (ῥοίζειν) as in fragment 37, line 1 and 9 des Places does not seem to be supported by the literal meaning of the text.

68 On luminous manifestations of the gods, see Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, I. 9, 30, 5–15–31, 1–8 des Places, where he explains that the god's light is not commingled with the inferior beings it illuminates. On the concept of light in Iamblichus, see L. Bergmann, *Kraftmetaphysik und Mysterienkult im Neuplatonismus* (München–Leipzig, 2006), 217–410. This is an important contribution, but it must be pointed out that in this book the author follows Iles Johnston's identification of Hecate with the Platonic World Soul (see for example ibid., 293–295), which Iles Johnston herself subsequently rejected (see J. F. Finamore–S. Iles Johnston, *The Chaldean Oracles*, in Gerson, *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* [2010], 165 and note 15).

69 Lewy (id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* [2011], 242) explains this as a symbol of Hecate, one of whose heads was that of a horse (see the ancient sources quoted by Lewy in ibid., note 55). Iles Johnston, however (id., *Hekate Soteria* [1990], 123), rightly criticizes Lewy's position, pointing out that the horse the fragment mentions must not necessarily be identified with Hecate since it could also represent the entites (be they souls of dead men or daemons) that accompanied her.

70 Iles Johnston (id., Riders in the Sky: Cavalier Gods and theurgical Salvation in the Second Century A.D.: *Classical Philology* 4 [87] [1992] 303–321) tentatively suggests that this apparition could be modeled on the cavalier gods of Mediterranean spirituality (ibid., 315, 320), such as Horus/Harpocrates (ibid., 309); Mithras (ibid., 310); the Jewish Messiah (311–312) and the Danubian rider god (312–315). Although fascinating, this hypothesis is also problematic, since, as Iles Johnston herself points out (ibid., 315) there is no trace of these gods in the extant Chaldean fragments.

71 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 241.

72 Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteria* (1990), 122–124.

73 Ibid., 29–38.

74 Ibid., 22–23, 26. An interesting comparison between the Homeric and Proclean Hymns can be found in R. M. van den Berg, *The Homeric Hymns in Late Antiquity: Proclus and the Hymn to Ares*, in A. Faulkner–A. Vergados–A. Schwab eds., *The Reception of the Homeric Hymns* (Oxford, 2016), 203–219.

75 Ibid., 36–38. On Plutarch, see id., *Moralia*, M. Pohlenz ed., vol. 5.3 (Leipzig, 1960).

76 To show the 'concordance' between different religious traditions was one of the main goals of Neo-Platonists. Syrianus, Proclus' master, wrote a book that has not come down to us entitled *On the Harmony of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato with the Oracles*, and there is no doubt that his disciple intended to follow his master's example. On this, see the following fundamental contribution: H. D. Saffrey, *Accorder entre elles les traditions théologiques: une charactéristique du néoplatonisme athénien*, in Bos–Mejier, *On Proclus and His Influence* (1992), 35–50.

77 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 51.

78 G. van Riel, *Proclus on Matter and Physical Necessity*, in Chiaradonna–Trabattoni, *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism* (2009),

245–246 (the author refers to Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II. 1, 385, 17–386, 8 Diehl).

79 Proclus, *Tria opuscola (De Providentia, Libertate, Malo)*, H. Boese ed. (Berlin, 1960), 164, 27–28; 130, 15–16.

80 See the ancient sources quoted by R. Majercik (id., *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 191) where this expression appears: Christian (Augustine, *Confessiones*, M. Skutella ed. [Leipzig, 1934], 1,1); Gnostic (*Marsanes*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codex* X, 2, 16 Pearson); Neo-Platonic (Plotinus, *Ennead IV*, 2 [1], 1, 9 Henry-Schwyzer; Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, V. 26 des Places). In ibid., Majercik explains the expression 'ἐν δὲ θεῷ κεῖνται' as if it referred to Aion, in whom the soul rests before the final contemplation of the 'Highest God' is achieved, but this interpretation, which follows Lewy's (id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* [2011], 201–202) is not grounded on this oracular text, which makes no explicit mention of Aion, while it refers to the Father.

81 Ibid., 191, where in this respect she compares this fragment with fragment 124 des Places.

82 Proclus, *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, in J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, V. 195, 1–16 = É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 211, 1–15.

83 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, V. 26, 237, 16–17 des Places.

84 See also the other ancient sources in which this expression is used quoted by Majercik (id. *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 214: Synesius, *Hymni*, 1(3) 37, 710; 2(4), 292 Terzaghi. Proclus, *Hymni*, E. Vogt ed. [Wiesbaden, 1957], I, 32; II, 6. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, C. Marchesi ed. [Turin, 1953], II. 62).

85 R. Majercik rightly points out that similar expressions can be found in Hermetic (*Corpus Hermeticum* XIII, 16 Nock–Festugière), Gnostic (*The Discourse on the Eight and Nine*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codex* VI, 58, 20–25; 59, 19–22; 60, 1–5 Parrot; *The Three Steles of Seth*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codex* VII, 127, 13–16 Pearson; *Allogenes*, in *Nag-Hammadi Codex* XI, 60, 15–18 Hedrick), Christian (Synesius, *Hymni* 2(4), 82–86 Terzaghi) and Magic (*The Mithras Liturgy*, 9, 13, 21 Meyer) ancient sources.

86 See for example É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, fragment 211, pag. 116.

87 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 43–44.

88 E. R. Dodds, *New Light on the Chaldean Oracles* (1961), 265–267.

89 *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*, frg. 349, 5 Smith.

90 On the δοχεύς, see E. R. Dodds, *Theurgy and Its Relationship to Neo-Platonism* (1947), 65–69. J. F. Finamore–I. Johnston, *The Chaldean Oracles*, in Gerson, *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (2010), 170–171. A. Uždavinys, *Philosophy and Theurgy in Late Antiquity* (Brooklyn, NY, 2014), 86. I. Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity* (2013), 42.

91 E. R. Dodds, *New Light on the Chaldean Oracles* (1961), 266.

92 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 246, 23–27 Kroll (καὶ οἱ τῶν θεῶν ἱεροὶ καὶ οἱ κλήτορες καὶ οἱ δοχεῖς πολυειδέσιν ἐχρῶντο χιτῶσιν καὶ καταζώσεσιν, μιμούμενοι τὰς θείας ζωάς, εἰς ἃς ἀνῆγον τὴν ἑαυτῶν πραγματείαν).

93 See fragment 135 des Places.

94 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 176, 100, 20–25 Pasquali.

95 Of this opinion is R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 194.

96 See also H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 42 and note 132.

97 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 193–194 and note 67.

98 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 141–142.

99 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 186.

100 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 194 and note 67 where he quotes Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 112, 21 and 120, 4; *In Alcibiadem*, 463, 5 Cousin = 177, 8–9 Westernik.

101 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 291 and note 124. See also É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 115.
102 Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, 72, 34, 15–25–35, 1–15 Pasquali.
103 On the angels in Proclus, see L. Brisson, *The Angels in Proclus: Messengers of the Gods*, in L. Brisson–S. O' Neill–A. Timotin eds., *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels* (Leiden–Boston, 2018), 209–230.
104 On angels and daemons in the Chaldean system, see H. Seng, *Demons and Angels in the Chaldean Oracles*, in Brisson–O' Neill–Timotin, *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels* (2018), 46–85.
105 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 154, 16–17 Kroll.
106 Ibid., 19–20.
107 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 436, 22–23.
108 Ibid., I. 137, 10–15 Diehl.
109 See for example Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, I. 20, 64, 1–10 des Places.
110 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 89.
111 With regard to the word 'βαπτισθεῖσα', R. Majercik (id., *The Chaldean Oracles* [1989], 114) refers to *Corpus Hermeticum*, XII. 2 Nock–Festugière. See also the sources quoted by H. Lewy in id., *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 277 and note 77.
112 With regard to daemons in Proclus, see A. Timotin, *Proclus' Critique of Plotinus' Demonology*, in Brisson–O' Neill–Timotin, *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels* (2018), 190–208.

5 Proclus' *On Chaldean Philosophy*
Translation[1] and commentary

5.1 Introduction

Those presented here are five long extracts from Proclus' treatise *On Chaldean Philosophy*[1] collated by the Byzantine polymath Michael Psellus.[2] The most ancient witnesses are two manuscripts dated to the second half of the 13th century: V located in the Vatican (V = Vaticanus graecus 1026, *circa* 1250–1270, ff. 231 v° – 233 r°);[3] B located in the Bodleian Library (B = [Bodleianus] Baroccianus 131, c. 1250–1270, ff. 409 v° – 411).[4] The title of this Proclean work is the one given in the manuscripts, namely 'Proclus from *On the Same Chaldean Philosophy*' (Πρόκλου ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς χαλδαϊκῆς φιλοσοφίας), which certainly does not coincide with the original one, since the expression 'Chaldean philosophy' never appears in Proclus; this means that it must be probably attributed to Psellus.[5]

The five extracts are unfortunately unconnected to each other and deal with different topics: 1 describes the importance of the help of angels for the initiate's ascent towards the divine dimension; 2 starts by describing the Soul's faculties, then teaches how to celebrate the Father in the appropriate way, exhorting the reader to abandon the world of becoming and choose love for the Father over all other things; 3 regards the material body as the root of all evil and teaches how to deal with the passions associated with it; 4 is the longest and most complex: it tackles again the subject of the Soul's faculties, from the lowest to the highest, and the role they play in man's ascent towards the Father; 5 concerns traditional concepts of Neo-Platonic philosophy, such as the reason-principles (the Stoic λόγοι σπερματικοὶ) and their relationship with intelligible Forms. This last extract is different from the other four insofar as it does not quote any Chaldean fragment. With regard to the content of these extracts, it must be pointed out that in some of them, as, for example, in extract n. 2, Proclus tends to jump from one topic to another (in this case, from the discussion about the Soul's energies/powers to the exegesis of the symbol of the earth), while in others the content does not change (as in the case of extract n. 1, which focuses entirely on the ascent of the Soul towards the divine dimension through the help of angels). This could be explained by assuming that Psellus collated some extracts (such as n. 2) by making use of different, disconnected parts of Proclus' treatise on

the *Chaldean Oracles*, probably because in his eyes their content was somehow related or because this way of proceeding served his own specific needs which are as such unknown to us.

We have decided, contrary to des Places,[6] not to give these extracts the title of 'Commentary on Chaldean Philosophy' but simply 'Proclus' *On Chaldean Philosophy*' since Proclus here does not use the same exegetical method as in the Platonic commentaries, that is, that of quoting a Platonic passage first and then explaining it. On the contrary, he presents his own argument on some specific topic then quotes a Chaldean passage that helps him to elucidate the message he intends to convey to the reader, explaining the oracular passage quoted only when he sees it fit. One has the impression that what we are dealing with here is a collection of notes taken by one of Proclus' students which the excerptor regarded as belonging to Proclus' supposed 'Commentary' on the *Chaldean Oracles*, though it is of course possible that they reflect Proclus' tratise on this subject to a large extent.

In his *Life of Proclus*, Marinus does not say explicitly that Proclus wrote a 'Commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*', but simply that he studied them almost by himself, since Syrianus had died before Proclus' disagreement with his fellow disciple Domninus whether their common master had to explain to them either the *Chaldean Oracles* or the Orphic texts was resolved.[7] Having received by Syrianus only the first elements of Chaldean doctrine,[8] Proclus had to rely on the text of the *Chaldean Oracles* themselves, on 'the best Commentaries on the God-given Oracles' (τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ὑπομνημάτων εἰς τὰ θεοπαράδοτα λόγια), namely Porphyry's and Iamblichus', as well as on Chaldean 'premises' (ὑποθέσεις) (probably a reference to the introductory material given to him by his master Syrianus), finishing (συμπληρώσας) to study these sources in five years.[9] Marinus also reports that Proclus had a dream in which Plutarch of Athens, Syrianus' master, predicted to him that he would have lived as many years as the pages of his 'compositions' (συγκειμένων) on the Oracles.[10] Suda[11] does not mention any 'Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles', but a work on the *Agreement of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato with the* Oracles, which was shown to be by Syrianus.[12]

5.2 Text[13]

Πρόκλου ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς χαλδαϊκῆς φιλοσοφίας

A´[14]

(pag. 206) Αὐλαὶ τῶν θείων καὶ οἰκήσεις αἱ ἀΐδιαι τάξεις. Καὶ ἡ 'πανδεκτικὴ αὐλὴ' τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡ πατρικὴ τάξις ἐστίν, ἡ πάσας (5) ὑποδεχομένη καὶ συνέχουσα τὰς ἀνα<χ>θείσας ψυχάς· ἡ δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων μερὶς πῶς ἀνάγει ψυχήν; φέγγουσα, φησί, πυρὶ τὴν ψυχήν, τοῦτ' ἔστι περιλάμπουσα αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν, καὶ πλήρη ποιοῦσα τοῦ ἀχράντου πυρὸς ὃ ἐνδίδωσιν αὐτῇ τάξιν ἄκλιτον καὶ δύναμιν δι'

ἣν οὐκ ἐκροιζεῖται (10) εἰς τὴν ὑλικὴν ἀταξίαν ἀλλὰ συνάπτεται τῷ φωτὶ τῶν θείων· καὶ συνέχει δὲ αὐτὴν ἐν οἰκείῳ τόπῳ, καὶ ἀμιγῆ ποιεῖ πρὸς τὴν ὕλην, τῷ θερμῷ πνεύματι κουφίζουσα καὶ ποιοῦσα μετέωρον διὰ τῆς ἀναγωγοῦ ζωῆς· τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα τὸ θερμὸν ζωῆς ἐστὶ μετάδοσις. (15) Κουφίζεται δὲ ἅπαν τὸ σπεῦδον εἰς τὸν ἄνω τόπον, ὥσπερ βρίθει τὸ εἰς τὴν ὕλην φερόμενον. Τέλος δὲ τῶν ἀνόδων ἡ μετουσία τῶν θείων καρπῶν καὶ ἡ αὐτοφαὴς τοῦ πυρὸς ἀποπλήρωσις, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ θεοῦ ὄψις, ὡς ὑπ᾽ ὄμμασιν αὐτὴν τιθεῖσα τοῦ Πατρός. (20) Ὑμνῳδὸς δὲ ἀποτελεῖται τῶν θείων ἡ ψυχή, κατὰ τὸ λόγιον, τὰ συνθήματα τοῦ Πατρός τὰ ἄρρητα προβαλλομένη καὶ προσφέρουσα αὐτὰ τῷ Πατρί, ἃ ἐνέθετο ὁ Πατὴρ εἰς αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ παρόδῳ τῆς οὐσίας. Τοιοῦτοι γὰρ οἱ νοεροὶ καὶ ἀφανεῖς ὕμνοι τῆς ἀναγομένης ψυχῆς, (pag. 207) ἀνακινοῦντες τὴν μνήμην τῶν ἁρμονικῶν λόγων οἳ φέρουσιν ἀπορρήτους εἰκόνας τῶν θείων ἐν αὐτῇ δυνάμενων.

***B*[15]**

Πρόκλου ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς φιλοσοφίας

(pag. 207) (5) 'Ψυχῆς βάθος' τὰς τριπλᾶς αὐτῆς γνωστικὰς δυνάμεις φησί, νοεράς, διανοητικάς, δόξαστικάς· 'ὄμματα' δὲ 'πάντα', τὰς τριπλᾶς αὐτῶν γνωστικὰς ἐνεργείας. Τὸ γὰρ ὄμμα, γνώσεως σύμβολον· ἡ δὲ ζωή, ὀρέξεως· τριπλᾶ δὲ ἑκατέρα. Γῆ δὲ ἀφ᾽ ἧς δεῖ κουφίζειν τὴν καρδίαν (10), τὰ ὑλικὰ πάντα καὶ τὰ ποικίλα τῶν ἐν γενέσει φερομένων, καὶ πᾶς τύπος σωματικός· οἷς ἔπεται θέα μὲν τῆς πατρικῆς μονάδος, εὐφροσύνη δὲ ἄχραντος ἐπ᾽αὐτήν, εὐστάθειά τε ἀπὸ τῆς νοερᾶς ταύτης περιωπῆς· ἀφ᾽ ὧν δῆλον ὡς μικτὸν ἡμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἔκ τε κινήσεως καὶ τῆς συμφυοῦς εὐφροσύνης. (15) Πᾶσα γὰρ ζωή, τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἐνέργειαν εὔλυτον ἔχουσα, ἡδονὴν ἔλαχεν αὐτῇ σύζυγον. Ὕμνος δὲ τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐ λόγοι σύνθετοι, οὐκ ἔργων κατασκευή· μόνος γὰρ ἄφθαρτος ὤν, φθαρτὸν ὕμνον οὐ δέχεται· μὴ οὖν κενῇ ῥημάτων καταιγίδι πείσειν ἐλπίζωμεν τὸν λόγων ἀληθῶν δεσπότην (20) μηδὲ ἔργων φαντασίᾳ μετὰ τέχνης κεκαλλωπισμένων· ἀκαλλώπιστον εὐμορφίαν θεὸς φιλεῖ. Ὕμνον οὖν τῷ θεῷ τοῦτον ἀναθῶμεν· καταλίπωμεν τὴν ῥέουσαν οὐσίαν· ἔλθωμεν ἐπὶ τὸν ἀληθῆ σκοπόν, τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐξομοίωσιν· γνωρίσωμεν τὸν δεσπότην, ἀγαπήσωμεν τὸν Πατέρα (25)· (pag. 208) καλοῦντι πεισθῶμεν· τῷ θερμῷ προσδράμωμεν, τὸ ψυχρὸν ἐκφυγόντες· πῦρ γενώμεθα, διὰ πυρὸς ὁδεύσωμεν. Ἔχομεν εὔλυτον ὁδὸν εἰς ἀνέλευσιν· Πατὴρ ὁδηγεῖ, πυρὸς ὁδοὺς ἀναπτύξας μὴ ταπεινὸν ἐκ λήθης ῥευσωμεν χεῦμα (5).

***Γ*΄[16]**

Πρόκλου

(pag. 208)΄Ρίζα τῆς κακίας τὸ σῶμα, ὥσπερ τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁ νοῦς. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἄνωθεν ἐκβλυστάνει ταῖς ψυχαίς, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν χειρόνων (10) ἐπεισκωμάζει καὶ κάτωθεν· τὸ δὲ καταβαλεῖν εἰς γῆν, τὸ ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν ἐκκόψαι· ἐᾶσαι δὲ αὐτήν, ὅποι παρετάχθη φέρεσθαι· τέτακται δὲ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γενέσει. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τὰ κακὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ 'τόνδε τὸν τόπον ἐξ ἀνάγκης περιπολεῖ', μέρος δὲ καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον σῶμα (15)

τῆς γενέσεως, μέρος μὲν οὖν ἀκάκυντον ποιεῖν, δυνατόν, ὅλην δὲ τὴν γένεσιν, ἀδύνατον, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὸ εἶναι αὐτῆς ἀνέλοιμεν· εἰς ἣν καὶ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον καταβλητέον ὅθενπερ αὐτὰ κατελέξατο· ὑλικὰ γὰρ ὄντα τὴν ὕλην ἔχει τιθήνην· τὸ δὲ 'μὴ σβέσαι φρενὶ' πρὸς τὴν ἀπόκλεισιν, οὐ πρὸς τὸν ἀφανισμὸν εἴρηται, καθάπερ τὰ ἐναποσβεννύμενά τινι περιέχεται ὅλα ἐν ἐκείνῳ καὶ ἀναπίμπλησιν αὐτὸ τῆς οἰκείας θέρμης· ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ σβέσαι κατάβαλε, μὴ ἔχων αὐτὸν ἔνδον καθειργμένον· διόπερ ἐπάγει· 'Μὴ πνεῦμα μολύνῃς', διὰ τοῦ ἔχειν ἔνδον καὶ ἀποκρύψαι. (25) Ὑλικὸς δὲ ὁ φθόνος· στερήσει γὰρ τῶν ἀγαθῶν σύνοικος, ἡ δὲ στέρησις τῇ ἀγόνῳ ὕλῃ συνυφέστηκεν· ἄφθονον δὲ τὸ θεουργὸν φῦλον καὶ ἀνατεινόμενον εἰς τὸν ζῆλον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγαθότητος, ἀλλ᾽οὐκ εἰς φιλονεικίας ἀνθρώπων καὶ δυσμενείας κατασπώμενον. (pag. 209) Ταῦτα δὲ τὰ πάθη, ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐναποκλειόμενα, ἐναπομόργυνταί τινα ἐν τῷ πνεύματι κακίαν ἔνυλον καὶ ἀναπίμπλησιν αὐτὸ τῆς ὑλικῆς στερήσεως καὶ ἀζωΐας. (5)

Δ´[17]

Τοῦ αυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς φιλοσοφίας

(pag. 209) Ἱσταμένη ἡ ψυχὴ κατὰ τὸ διανοητικὸν τὸ ἑαυτῆς, ἐπιστήμων ἐστὶ τῶν ὄντων· ἐν δὲ τῷ νοερῷ τῆς οἰκείας οὐσίας ἑαυτὴν ἱδρύσασα, νοεῖ τὰ πάντα ταῖς ἁπλαῖς καὶ ἀμερίστοις ἐπιβολαῖς. (10) Εἰς δὲ τὸ ἓν ἀναδραμοῦσα, καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ συμπτύξασα πλῆθος, ἐνθεαστικῶς ἐνεργεῖ καὶ συνάπτεται ταῖς ὑπὲρ νοῦν ὑπάρξεσι· τῷ γὰρ ὁμοίῳ πανταχοῦ τὸ ὅμοιον συνάπτεσθαι πέφυκε, καὶ πᾶσα γνῶσις δι᾽ ὁμοιότητα συνδεῖ τῷ κατανοουμένῳ τὸ κατανοοῦν, τῷ μὲν αἰσθητῷ τὸ αἰσθητικόν, τῷ δὲ διανοητῷ τὸ διανοητικόν, τῶ δὲ νοητῷ τὸ νοητικόν, ὥστε καὶ τῷ πρὸ νοῦ τὸ ἄνθος τοῦ νοῦ. 'Ως γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις οὔκ ἐστι νοῦς τὸ ἀκρότατον, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ὑπὲρ νοῦν αἰτία, οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς οὔκ ἐστι νοερὸν τὸ πρῶτον τῆς ἐνεργείας εἶδος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ νοῦ θειότερον· (20) καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς ἐνεργείας ἔχει διττάς, τὰς μὲν ἑνοειδεῖς καὶ κρείττονας νοήσεως, τὰς δὲ νοητικάς. Δεῖ οὖν ἐκεῖνο τὸ νοητὸν καὶ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ ἑνιστάμενον καὶ τὴν ὕπαρξιν νοεῖν, μύσαντα κατὰ πάσας τὰς ἄλλας ζωὰς καὶ δυνάμεις. (25) 'Ως γὰρ νοειδεῖς γιγνόμενοι τῷ νῷ πρόσιμεν, οὕτως ἑνοειδεῖς πρὸς τὴν ἕνωσιν ἀνατρέχομεν, ἐπ᾽ ἄκρῳ τῷ οἰκείῳ στάντες νῷ· ἐπεὶ καὶ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ ἄλλως ὁρᾷ τὸν ἥλιον ἢ γενόμενος ἡλιοειδής, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τῷ ἐκ πυρὸς φωτί· ᾧ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι τὸ νοεῖν ἐκεῖνο μὴ νοεῖν ἐστίν. (pag. 210) 'Εὰν δέ', φησίν, 'ἐπεγκλίνῃς σὸν νοῦν', τοῦτ᾽ ἐστιν, ἐπερείσῃς ταῖς νοεραῖς ἐπιβολαῖς εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο συναφήν, καὶ οὕτως 'ἐκεῖνο νοήσῃς' τὸ νοητόν, 'ὅς τι νοῶν', τοῦτ᾽ ἐστι, κατά τι μέτρον εἴδους καὶ γνώσεως (5) ἐπιβλητικῶς, 'οὐκ ἐκεῖνο νοήσεις'· κἂν γὰρ ὦσιν αἱ τοιαῦται νοήσεις ἁπλαῖ, ἀπολείπονται τῆς τοῦ νοητοῦ ἑνιαίας ἁπλότητος καὶ εἰς δευτέρας φέρονταί τινας νοερὰς <φύσεις> εἰς πλῆθος ἤδη προελθούσας. Οὐδὲν γὰρ γνωστὸν δι᾽ ἐλάττονος γιγνώσκεται γνώσεως· οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ τὸ ὑπὲρ νοῦν, διὰ νοῦ· (10) ἅμα γὰρ νοῦς ἐπιβάλλει τινὶ καὶ τοιόνδε λέγει τὸ νοούμενον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τοῦ νοητοῦ δεύτερον· ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ἐν τῷ ἄνθει τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν νοῦ τὸ νοητὸν τοῦτο νοοῦμεν, ἐπ᾽ ἄκρῳ τῆς πρώτης νοητῆς τριάδος ἱδρυνθέν, τίνι ἂν ἔτι συναφθείη μὲν πρὸς τὸ ἕν, ὅ ἐστιν ἀσύντακτον πρὸς πάντα καὶ ἀμέθεκτον; εἰ γὰρ ὁ πρῶτος 'Πατὴρ' (15) ἁρπάζειν

'ἑαυτόν' λέγεται τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῆς 'δυνάμεως', τίς ὁ μηδέ οὕτως ἁρπάσαι δεηθεὶς ἑαυτόν, ἀλλ' ὑπερηρπασμένος ἀπὸ πάντων ἁπλῶς καὶ θεὸς πάντων ὑμνούμενος; εἰ δὲ καὶ περὶ τοῦ πρωτίστου Πατρὸς ἐν ἄλλοις (20) εἴρηται· 'καὶ δύναμιν πρώτην ἱεροῦ λόγου', τίς ὁ ὑπὲρ τοῦτον καὶ οὗπερ οὗτος μετέχων ἱερὸς λέγεται; καὶ εἰ ὁ ἐκφαίνων ἀρρητότερον ὄντα λόγος ὀνομάζεται, δεῖ πρὸ τοῦ λόγου τὴν τὸν λόγον ὑποστήσασαν εἶναι σιγήν, καὶ πρὸ παντὸς ἱεροῦ τὴν ἐκθεωτικὴν αἰτίαν. (25) 'Ως οὖν τὰ μετὰ τὰ νοητὰ λόγοι τῶν νοητῶν εἰσί, συνηγμένων ὄντων, οὕτως ὁ ἐν ἐκείνοις λόγος, ἀπ' ἄλλης ἀρρητοτέρας ἑνάδος ὑποστάς, λόγος μέν ἐστι τῆς πρὸ τῶν νοητῶν σιγῆς, τῶν δὲ νοητῶν σιγωμένων, (5) σιγή. Μήποτε οὖν οὐκ ἐστι ταὐτὸν νοῦ ἄνθος καὶ πάσης ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἄνθος· ἀλλὰ τὸ μέν ἐστι τῆς νοερᾶς ἡμῶν ζωῆς τὸ ἑνοειδέστατον, τὸ δὲ ἁπασῶν τῶν ψυχικῶν δυνάμεων ἕν, πολυειδῶν (pag. 211) οὐσῶν· οὐ γάρ ἐσμεν νοῦς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διάνοια καὶ δόξα καὶ προσοχὴ καὶ προαίρεσις, καὶ πρὸ τῶν δυνάμεων τούτων οὐσία μία τε καὶ πολλὴ καὶ μεριστή τε καὶ ἀμερής. Διττοῦ τε τοῦ ἑνὸς πεφηνότος, καὶ τοῦ μὲν τῆς πρωτίστης (5) ἡμῶν τῶν δυνάμεων ἄνθους ὄντος, <τοῦ> δὲ τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας κέντρου καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὴν ἁπασῶν παν|τοίων δυνάμεων, ἐκεῖνο μόνον ἡμᾶς συνάπτει τῷ πατρὶ τῶν νοητῶν· νοερὸν γάρ ἐστιν ἕν, νοεῖται δὲ καὶ ἐκεῖνο ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρικοῦ νοῦ κατὰ τὸ ἓν τὸ ἐν αυτῷ· τὸ δὲ ἓν εἰς ὃ πᾶσαι αἱ (10) ψυχικαὶ δυνάμεις συννεύουσιν αὐτῆς [ὃ] μόνον πέφυκε προσάγειν ἡμᾶς τῷ πάντων ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὄντων, καὶ αὐτὸ πάντων ὂν τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἑνοποίον· καθὸ καὶ ἐρριζώθημεν κατ' οὐσίαν ἐν ἐκείνῳ, καὶ τῷ ἐρριζῶσθαι κἂν προΐωμεν, οὐκ ἀποστησόμεθα τῆς ἑαυτῶν αἰτίας. (15)

E′[18]

Πρόκλου ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς φιλοσοφίας

(pag. 211) 'Η φιλοσοφία τήν τε λήθην καὶ ἀνάμνησιν τῶν ἀιδίων λόγων αἰτιᾶται τῆς τε ἀποφοιτήσεως τὴς ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν (20) καὶ τῆς ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐπιστροφῆς· τὰ δὲ λόγια, τῶν πατρικῶν συνθημάτων. Συνᾴδει δὲ ἀμφότερα· συνέστηκε γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν θείων συμβόλων· ὧν οἱ μέν εἰσιν ἀπὸ τῶν νοερῶν εἰδῶν, τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων ἑνάδων· καί ἐσμεν εἰκόνες μὲν τῶν νοερῶν οὐσιῶν, (25) ἀγάλματα [τὰ] δὲ τῶν ἀγνώστων συνθημάτων. Καὶ ὥσπερ πᾶσα ψυχὴ πάντων μέν ἐστι πλήρωμα τῶν εἰδῶν, (pag. 212) κατὰ μίαν δὲ ὅλως αἰτίαν ὑφέστηκεν, οὕτω καὶ πάντων μὲν μετέχει τῶν συνθημάτων, δι' ὧν συνάπτεται τῷ θεῷ, ἀφώρισται δὲ ἡ ὕπαρξις ἐν ἑνὶ, καθὸ συνάγεται πᾶν τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ πλῆθος εἰς μίαν κορυφήν. Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο (5) εἰδέναι, ὡς πᾶσα ψυχὴ πάσης κατ' εἶδος διέστηκε, καὶ ὅσαι ψυκαί, τοσαῦτα καὶ τὰ εἴδη τῶν ψυχῶν ἐστι· πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ καθ' ἓν εἶδος, πολλῶν ἀτόμων ὑπόστασις ἑνοειδῶν περί τε τὴν ὕλην ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ σύνθετα τῶν ὄντων, μιᾶς ὑποκειμένης φύσεως ποικίλως τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετεχούσης εἴδους· (10) εἰ γὰρ τὸ εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς λόγος εστὶ καὶ εἶδος ἁπλοῦν, ἢ οὐδὲν διοίσει κατ' οὐσίαν ψυχή τις ἄλλης, ἢ κατ' εἶδος ἂν διαφέροι· ὃ γάρ ἐστι διοίσει μόνον, ἔστι δὲ εἶδος μόνον. Ὅθεν δῆλον ὡς πᾶσα ψυχὴ κἂν τῶν αὐτῶν ᾖ λόγων πλήρης, ἀλλ' ἓν εἶδος ἔλαχεν (15) ἀφοριστικὸν τῶν ἄλλων, ὥσπερ τὸ ἡλιακὸν εἶδος χαρακτηρίζει τὴν ἡλιακὴν ψυχήν, ἄλλο ἄλλην.

5.3 Translation

1 Proclus from On the Same Chaldean Philosophy

(1) The eternal orders are the courts and residences of the gods. And the '**court open to all**' (frg. 202 des Places) of the Father is the paternal order, which welcomes and embraces all souls that have been raised (to the divine dimension); but how does the order of angels raise the soul? '**By**', (the Oracle) says, '**making the soul bright with fire**' (frg. 122 des Places), that is, (5) by illuminating it from every side and filling it up with immaculate fire which grants it (both) infallible order and the power of not being dispersed in the material disorder but of being reunited with the light of the gods.

(The angelic order) maintains the soul in its own place and prevents it from mixing with matter, '**lightening (it) with a hot breath**' (frg. 123 des Places) and elevating (it) by (making it live) an uplifted life since (10) the hot breath is what gives life. (20) But as all that is illuminated hastens to the place above, in the same way, that which is led towards matter is weighed down with (it). (15) But the end of the ascent (is) the participation in the divine fruits and the self-illuminating condition (of) becoming full of fire, which is the vision of God, which is like placing the soul under the eyes of the Father. The soul is then, according to the Oracle, made capable of singing hymns to the gods and of laying before the Father as well as of giving back to (Him His own) unspeakable symbols, (those) which the Father (20) '**put into**' (frg. 94, v. 2 des Places) the soul during the first creation of (its) essence. These are actually the secret and intellectual hymns of the raising soul that awaken its memory of the harmonic discourses which bring (with themselves) the unspeakable images of the divine powers that (the soul contains) in itself.

2 Proclus from the same

(The Oracle) calls '**depth of the soul**' (frg. 112 des Places) its triple cognitive powers, namely, (1) the intellectual, the *dianoetic* and the *doxastic*, and 'all the eyes' its triple cognitive energies: this is so because the eye is a symbol of knowledge, while life (is a symbol) of longing after (something), but both are threefold. (5) Now the earth above which it is necessary to raise the heart (symbolizes) all material and manifold things that are brought into the world of becoming as well as any corporeal form; after them comes the contemplation of the paternal monad, the pure joy of (seeing) it, the stability (deriving from) this intellectual contemplation; (10) from which things it is clear that our good is mixed, (that is), (made up) of both movement and connatural joy. (This is so) because any life that has freed its own energy obtains that pleasure (which) becomes part of itself. But the hymn of the Father (cannot be sung) neither (with) elaborate arguments nor (through) the accomplishment of deeds, since, being (the Father) the eternal

one, (He) does not accept a perishable hymn. Do not hope then to persuade the master of true discourses with an empty torrent of words (15) nor with the appearance of artificially embellished deeds, since God loves unadorned beauty. Hence, let us dedicate this hymn to God: let us abandon the world of becoming; let us go towards (our) true goal, that is, becoming like Him; let us know the Lord (20) and love the Father; let us heed His call; let us run towards the hot (breath) and escape the cold one; let us become fire and travel through fire. Nothing prevents us from accomplishing the ascent; the Father guides (us): (He) disclosed the ways of fire, so that (25) '**we do not flow into a low stream because of forgetfulness**' (frg. 171 des Places).

3 By Proclus

(1) As the body is the root of evil, so the intellect of virtue, since the latter gushes forth for the souls from above, while the former rushes in disorderly from inferior things as well as from below; the '**throwing down to earth**' (corresponds to) being cut off from our (true) selves, while '**letting it be**' (means) to be brought to the place that has been prepared, that is, to be placed in the whole (material) creation. (5) Since there are evils here below and '**by necessity this place circularly moves**' and since our body is part of this (material) creation only a part of it can be made unencumbered by evils (namely, our own body), but it is impossible (to do so) with regard to the whole creation, unless we destroy its very being. It is in it (the material creation) that one must abandon jealousy and envy (10), from where (one) has chosen these things, since, being material, they have matter as nurse. But '**not to quench in your own mind**' (frg. 105 des Places) has been said (in the sense of) shutting (oneself) out (of passions) and not (as an advice on causing) (their) destruction, inasmuch as what is quenched by something is contained in it in its entirety and fills it up with its own warmth; (15) and instead of quenching (the senses), reject (them), without keeping (the desire of quenching the senses) hidden within. On which account (the Oracle) adds: '**Do not defile the breath**' (frg. 104 des Places) that is hidden (from sight) within (our own bodies). But envy is material, since it is associated with privation of goods and privation has come into existence together with sterile matter. (20) But the theurgic race (is) without envy and makes the effort of emulating God's goodness instead of being dragged to men's love for contentiousness and ill-will. But these passions, enclosed in the souls, impress material evil on the *pneuma* and fill it up with material privation and absence of life (25).

4 By the same from the same

(1) When the soul establishes itself according to its *dianoetic* faculty, it possesses a perfect knowledge of beings, while, when (it) has settled in the intellectual (part) of its being, it apprehends all things through simple and

undivided intellections. But when it has returned to the One and led back to (unity) all multiplicity which is in itself, it acts in a (5) divinely inspired manner and is connected with the substances (that exist) above Intellect. What is like something else is disposed by nature to be united to it, and any knowledge unites the knowing subject to the object known through likeness, (and it is in this way that) sense-perception (is united) to the sensible object, *dianoetic* thinking to what is thought *dianoetically*, intellection to what is thought noetically (10) and, finally, the 'flower of Intellect' to what (is) before Intellect. As then in other (domains) Intellect is not the highest (reality), but the cause which is above Intellect, so in souls the intellectual (one) is not the first form of activity but that which is more divine than Intellect. And every soul and every Intellect has a double energy, one unitary (15) and better than the intellectual, the other noetic. It is necessary to think of noetic (activity) as intelligible, according to what comes into being and to reality, ceasing (to think of it) based on other lives and powers.

As then after we have become intellectual we are united to Intellect, so, (after we have become) one, we run back towards union (with the One) (20) (thus) standing on top of our own Intellect. The eye too does not see the sun unless it becomes solar and (it does) not (do so) through the light (that comes) from fire; from which it is clear that thinking of that (the One) coincides with not thinking of it (at all). '**But if**', (the Oracle) says, '**you incline your Intellect**' – that is, (if you) lean (your Intellect) on intellectual apprehensions for (achieving) union with the One (25) – in the (same) measure in which '**you think of that**' (as of something) intelligible, '**as if you thought of something**', that is, according to a certain proportion of form and knowledge, '**you will not think of it**' (at all) (cf. frg. 1 des Places). (This is so) because, (though) such intellections (are) simple, (they) are (also) wanting in the unitary simplicity of the intelligible and (30) move towards some of the secondary intellectual natures that have already advanced towards multiplicity. Since no knowable thing is known through an inferior (form) of knowledge, what is above Intellect (is) certainly (not known) through Intellect, given that this apprehends something and at the same time defines it as the object being thought of, which (as such) comes after (what is) intelligible. (35)

But if we think of this intelligible that has been established on top of the first intelligible triad by virtue of the 'flower of Intellect' in us, how will it (then be) possible to be united to the One, which is unconnected to anything and imparticipable? Because, if the primal '**Father**' is said to '**snatch Himself away**' from Intellect and '**Power**' (cf. frg. 3 des Places), who is he who has no need to snatch himself away, (40) but absolutely transcends anything and is celebrated as the God of everything? But if in another passage (of the *Chaldean Oracles*) the following is said concerning the primal Father: '**And primal Power of the sacred Word**' (frg. 175 des Places), who (is) he who (is) above this and participating in whom the primal Father is said to be sacred? And if he who has appeared as unspeakable (45) is called 'Word', it is necessary that, before the Word, that which makes the Word come into existence

be Silence, in the same way as the divinizing cause (must be placed) before anything sacred. As then the beings that come after the intelligible ones, which exist (in them) in a unified state, are their 'words', so the Word which (is) in the intelligible, having been given substance by the other unspeakable henad (*scil.* Silence), is Word of the Silence that precedes the intelligibles (50), while Silence (is the silence) of the intelligibles.

On no account, then, the flower of Intellect (is) the same as (the flower) of the whole soul, but the former is what (is) more unified in the context of our intellectual life, while the latter (is) the unity of all psychic powers, which are of many kinds. (This is so) because we are not only Intellect but also reason (55), opinion, attention, choice and before these powers an essence (that is both) one and manifold, divisible and indivisible. Given that the one (in us) has manifested itself as double, on the one hand as flower of the first of our powers, on the other as centre of the whole essence and of powers of all sorts (60) (that revolve) around it, only the one (that is in us can) unite us to the Father of the intelligibles. (This is so) because one (*scil.* the flower of Intellect) is intellectual and thinks on the basis of the One which is in it under the rule of the Paternal Intellect. But the one to which all psychic powers of the Soul converge (*scil.* the flower of the whole Soul) is the only one to be disposed by nature to lead us to what is above all beings (65), since it is this one that brings unity to all things that (are) in us. Wherefore we are rooted by essence in it and because of the fact of being rooted in it, even if we proceed, we are not uprooted from our cause.

5 By Proclus from the same

(1) Philosophy alleges as the cause of the oblivion and remembrance of eternal reason-principles the estrangement from the gods and the return to them. But the Oracles (explain the same fact as the oblivion and remembrance) of paternal symbols. And these (two explanations) agree with each other, since the Soul exists from sacred reason-principles and divine symbols (5), of which the ones come from intellectual Forms, while the others from divine henads. And we are (in turn) images of the intellectual essences and 'statues' of the unknowable symbols. And as the whole Soul is the fullness of all Forms but subsists according to an altogether unitary cause, so (it) participates in all (10) symbols by virtue of which (it) is united to God; but its own existence is delimitated by the one (in the Soul) insofar as (this) brings all multiplicity that is in it back to one summit.

Because it is also necessary to know this, (that is), that every soul differs according to (its own) Form and there are as many souls as their Forms. (15) In the first place, by virtue of a single Form many individuals that have a unitary Form in matter subsist as well as composed beings, since a single subjacent nature (*scil.* matter) participates in the same Form in many different ways. If then the Soul's being is definition and simple Form, either a soul is by essence not different at all from another or (it) differs by the Form, since that which simply differs is none other than Form. From which it is clear

that every soul, even if (it) is full of the same reason-principles, possesses only one Form that differentiates it from others; for example, the solar Form characterizes the solar soul and, another (Form), another (type of soul) (25).

5.4 Commentary

5.4.1 Extract n. 1

The first extract consists in a description of the ascent of the soul to the Father's '**court open to all**' (frg. 202 des Places), which Proclus identifies with the '**the paternal order**' (ἡ πατρικὴ τάξις) where the souls who have managed to transcend the material dimension finally arrive. In commenting on this fragment, we have seen that according to Proclus' exegesis the 'Father' mentioned here must be identified with the Demiurge, so that the 'the paternal order' must in turn coincide with the Demiurgic dimension; but we have said that this Proclean interpretation may not be fully faithful to the original Chaldean conception of the Father, whom, according to the evidence available, the Oracles identified with the First Principle; as a consequence, the 'court open to all' of fragment 202 des Places must also be referred to the paternal/intelligible dimension.

After briefly mentioning the Father, Proclus emphasizes the important role that angels play in guiding the Soul to Him. They do so by illuminating the Soul 'from every side' and by filling it up with their divine fire; this is an inferior manifestation of the transcendent fire of the Father and leads the soul back to Him on the basis of the principle according to which similar things are mutually attracted to each other. By being made '**bright with fire**' (frg. 122 des Places), the Soul is given the power of transcending the material dimension. But the mere fact of reaching its destination does not imply that it will remain there forever, unless the angels '**lighten (it) with a hot breath**' (frg. 123 des Places). This 'breath' is none other than the fiery *pneuma* by which the angels had made the Soul capable of leaving the material dimension and of which now they make use again to keep it in the paternal abode it has finally reached. The soul is now, Proclus says, 'full of fire', that is, able to fully participate in the divine nature, which the *Chaldean Oracles* symbolize with concepts like 'fire', 'light' and 'hot breath/*pneuma*'. The Soul is now 'enflamed' not by its old passions for material objects, but by ardent love for the Father, which, according to Proclus, culminates in the vision of Him; after this, the soul feels an urgent desire to celebrate the gods that surrounds Him with hymns as well as to give back to the Father the divine symbols He had placed in the soul after this entered the material dimension (frg. 94, v. 2 des Places).

5.4.2 Extract n. 2

Extract n. 2 starts with an explanation of the Chaldean expression '**depth of the soul**' (ψυχῆς βάθος) (frg. 112 des Places), which for Proclus refers to

the Soul's triple cognitive powers, that is, intellectual, *dianoetic* and *doxastic*, while the expression '**all the eyes**' (ὄμματα . . . πάντα) (frg. 112 des Places) would also refer to them but this time regarded as 'cognitive energies' (γνωστικὰς ἐνεργείας), not 'powers' (δυνάμεις). The degree of terminological precision of Proclean exegesis is here so high that it could be seen as a sign that the original meaning of these two expressions was different from the one proposed by Proclus, all the more because in the extant Chaldean fragments there is no clear trace of the Proclean division of the Soul's power/energies in intellectual, *dianoetic* and *doxastic*. Probably the expression '**depth of the soul**' referred to that aspect of the Soul that is capable of participating in the divine dimension and which the initiate had to discover within himself, since men are not generally aware of it, while '**all the eyes**' could, as Majercik,[19] who follows Lewy,[20] suggests, be linked with the concept of 'eye of the Soul', which opens up when the initiate has managed to reach the 'depth' of his own soul.

After discussing the Soul's faculties, Proclus jumps to a completely different topic, that is, the interpretation of the symbol of the earth, which for him symbolizes the world of becoming that the initiate has to abandon to achieve full contemplation of the paternal monad; this is the result of the movement of the soul away from matter and towards the divine dimension, which allows it to obtain the pleasure implied in a stable contemplation of the divine. Here Proclus seems to emphasize the important role played by the Soul's movement, which is not only that of going away from the Father, as when it enters the material world, but also of leaving it to go back to its own paternal abode.

After this, Proclus changes topic again and starts talking about the right way of celebrating the Father with hymns. This must not be done through 'elaborate arguments' (which clearly downsizes the importance of *dianoetic* and *doxastic* reason in the process of spiritual ascent) or by emphasizing one's own accomplishments (which would be a sign that the ego still has a firm grip on the initiate) but through hymns whose simplicity or 'unadorned beauty' (ἀκαλλώπιστον εὐμορφίαν) fully reflect the simplicity and oneness of the paternal Supreme Principle. It must be said that here Proclus seems to focus on the monadic nature of the Father, which rejects any form of multiplicity, that of celebrative hymns included.

Having explained the right way of worshipping the Father, in the last part of the extract Proclus exhorts the initiate to detach from the material world (*Theaetetus* 175 E–176; *Laws* IV 687 D–688 B, 716 B–D Burnet) and to achieve the Platonic 'similarity to God' (τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐξομοίωσιν) (*Timaeu*s 90 D; *Theaetetus* 176 B Burnet), which is the result of the ardent love the initiate has for Him (ἀγαπήσωμεν τὸν Πατέρα). Divine love must reach such a level of intensity that the initiate comes to the point of becoming fire itself (πῦρ γενώμεθα), thus reaching full similarity or 'ὁμοίωσις' with the Father or First Principle, which the *Chaldean Oracles* symbolized with the element fire. By becoming similar to the First Principle, the

initiate takes full possession of the 'hot breath' (τῷ θερμῷ προσδράμωμεν) by which the angels of extract n. 1 facilitated his ascent to the Father and leaves behind the cold one (τὸ ψυχρὸν ἐκφυγόντες), which, by 'cooling down' his ardent love for the Father, made him forget Him, as fragment 171 des Places,[21] which Proclus quotes without commenting on it, also hints at. According to Proclus, nothing prevents the initiate from accomplishing this objective, which however becomes possible only through the Father's help (Πατὴρ ὁδηγεῖ) in disclosing 'the ways of fire' (πυρὸς ὁδοὺς ἀναπτύξας); this could be a reference to theurgy as the tool that enables man to go back to the divine dimension, but also to the symbols the Father placed in the innermost recesses of man's soul.

5.4.3 Extract n. 3

Extract n. 3 starts with a definition of body as 'the root of evil' (ῥίζα τῆς κακίας τὸ σῶμα), while Intellect is presented as 'root of virtue' (ὥσπερ τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁ νοῦς). After this apparent introductory remark (unless this passage belongs to another part of his treatise on the *Chaldean Oracles*), Proclus moves to the exegesis of the expression '**throwing down to earth**' (τὸ δὲ καταβαλεῖν εἰς γῆν) which he does not interpret in detail, simply pointing out that it means 'to be cut off from our (true) selves' (τὸ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἐκκόψαι). Probably Proclus intends to say that man is fully himself only when his soul is not confined to the material body, of which the earth, for its connection with matter, could be regarded as a symbol, but when he is united to the Father as in extract n. 1. The sentence 'τὸ δὲ καταβαλεῖν εἰς γῆν' is not regarded by des Places as Chaldean, but we think there is no reason not to consider it so, since the mere fact that Proclus comments on it should, at least hypothetically, point to this conclusion.

The expression '**letting it be**' (ἐᾶσαι δὲ αὐτήν), which for Proclus means 'to be placed in the whole (material) creation', could also be a Chaldean fragment for the same reasons as the previous one. Because of its extreme conciseness, Proclus' exegesis of this possible oracular fragment is difficult to understand. Probably he wanted to say that the acquisition of a material body by the soul was not only the result of its own inclination towards matter (as fragments 163 and 164 des Places hint at) but also of a free decision of the Father (as in fragments 94 and 115 des Places), who placed it in the material world for some specific reasons, which, unfortunately, the extant Chaldean fragments do not explain to us.[22]

A Platonic quotation from Plato's Theaetetus 176 A 6–7 Burnet is the fragment '**by necessity this place circularly moves**' (τόνδε τὸν τόπον ἐξ ἀνάγκης περιπολεῖ), which Proclus quotes to compare the stability of the divine world to the circular movement of the material dimension, where anything that proceeds returns to its starting point just to start the process anew.

According to Proclus' exegesis, one of the parts of the world that 'circularly moves' (περιπολεῖ) is man's body, which can indeed be made free from the evils of this world while it is impossible to do so as far as the whole creation is concerned, since divine necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) has made it subject to constant change and then prone to the action of evils. Among them are 'jealousy and envy' (ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον), which the initiate must abandon while he lives here below (εἰς ἣν [*scil.* τὴν γένεσιν] καὶ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον καταβλητέον). Proclus' hint at the vice of envy can refer to Plato's *Timaeus* 29 E Burnet where it is said that what is good has no envy (ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος) since at the end of this extract Proclus says that, 'The theurgic race (is) without envy and makes the effort of emulating God's goodness' (ἄφθονον δὲ τὸ θεουργὸν φῦλον καὶ ἀνατεινόμενον εἰς τὸν ζῆλον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγαθότητος). Plato's influence on extract n. 3 can also be seen in the connection Proclus establishes between envy, privation and matter, since as envy consists in longing for something which one lacks, so according to Plato the ultimate nature of matter consists in privation of a specific form, which fact on the other hand makes it possible for it to receive in itself all forms (Plato, *Timaeus* 49–52 Burnet). The initiate must then fight against his passions which, being material, 'have matter as nurse' (ὑλικὰ γὰρ ὄντα τὴν ὕλην ἔχει τιθήνην), but he must not try to '**quench**' them in his own mind (frg. 105 des Places), that is, he must not try to extirpate them completely until he still is in the material body. This could be interpreted in the sense that for both Proclus and the authors of the Oracles, extreme forms of ascesis must be rejected because violent repression of passions makes them stronger, not weaker, in the same way in which one who would like to quench a flame must surround it completely to deprive it from air, but, in doing so, he becomes dangerously close to being burned by it. Therefore, the initiate must not even retain in himself the desire of eradicating passions completely but must simply shut the senses out (ἀπόκλεισις) and reject them (κατάβαλε). Probably Proclus is here referring to the practice of moving one's own attention away from sensible objects to prevent them from entering the consciousness' spectrum and take full possession of it. By doing so, the initiate can avoid polluting his own breath/*pneuma* (fr. 104 des Places), which in this case, as Majercik rightly points out,[23] refers to the ὄχημα or vehicle of the soul. We do not know what the Chaldean concept of the soul's vehicle originally was but only the different views of Neo-Platonists on this assuredly Chaldean concept. If fragment 104 des Places regards the ὄχημα-πνεῦμα as prone to be polluted by material passions, this means that it participates, at least to a certain extent, in matter. It is also important to differentiate the ὄχημα-πνεῦμα which fragment 104 des Places refers to from the 'hot pneuma' through which, according to extract n. 1, the angels free the initiate from the grip of the material dimension, since in this case this concept refers to the angels' power, which appears to the initiate as hot breath/*pneuma*.

5.4.4 Extract n. 4

Extract n. 4 is the longest of the five. It starts with a description of the soul's modes of knowledge: *dianoetic*, *noetic* and 'divinely inspired': the *dianoetic* knows reality through rational arguments, which have the disadvantage of multiplying the in-itself unitary nature of Being; the *noetic* mode is still bound to multiplicity but to a lesser degree than the first one: though it still divides the unitary nature of Being into several universal Forms or Ideas, it is capable of knowing them through 'simple and undivided intellections'; finally, the 'divinely inspired' mode transcends all multiplicity, even that which belongs to the intelligible Ideas and knows Being in its unitary nature, that is, insofar as this participates in the oneness of the One.[24] All these different modes of knowledge are based on the metaphysical principle of 'likeness' (οἰκείωσις), according to which sensible perception knows sensible objects, *dianoia*, *dianoetic* objects, *noesis*, intelligible ones and, finally, the 'flower of Intellect' (τὸ ἄνθος τοῦ νοῦ), 'what is above Intellect' (πρὸ νοῦ). We will go back to the 'flower of Intellect', but now it is important to say a few words on οἰκείωσις. This concept has for Proclus a metaphysical connotation since it implies that a being creates what is like itself first, then what is dissimilar (*Elements of Theology* prop. 29 Dodds). This is so because procession must happen gradually, through a series of intermediate steps where the proceeding element is linked with that from which it proceeds by its likeness to it. But procession of a being from another also implies reversion of the former to the latter, which is also made possible by the likeness of the reverting being to that to which it reverts. (*Elements of Theology*, prop. 32 Dodds). Finally, as Proclus explicitly states in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (II. 298, 27; III. 160, 18 Diehl), knowledge of a being by another also works through likeness, since reversion of the caused being to what causes it implies knowledge of the latter by the former, so that knowledge through likeness and reversion imply each other (*Elements of Theology*, prop. 39 Dodds).

Proclus then explains that as the One is above Intellect, so the soul's first form of activity is not that according to the Intellect, but that which operates according to the One. This is so because every soul (but also every Intellect) has a double form of activity: one based on the Intellect, the other on the One which manifests itself in all beings that participate in its unitary nature.

After this brief discussion of the two fundamental forms of activity of Intellect and Soul, Proclus makes use again of the concept of οἰκείωσις to point out that as, by becoming intellectual, we are united to Intellect, so, by becoming one, we are united to the One (ὡς γὰρ νοειδεῖς γιγνόμενοι τῷ νῷ πρόσιμεν, οὕτως ἑνοειδεῖς πρὸς τὴν ἕνωσιν ἀνατρέχομεν). In order to further illustrate his point, Proclus goes back to the application of the principle of 'likeness' to knowledge, saying that our eye must become 'solar' (ἡλιοειδής) to perceive the sun since the like knows its like; this is why, he says, 'thinking of' the One is equivalent to not thinking of it at all because the One, being above Intellect, is not *like* any kind of thinking activity.

Until now, Proclus has succinctly explained one of the most fundamental concepts of his own philosophical system, that of likeness or οἰκείωσις, but has commented on no Chaldean passage. We have a clear example of how Proclus' methodology is here different from that which he applied to his Platonic Commentaries, where he generally starts from quoting a Platonic passage first, then comments on it. These five extracts resemble much more a series of notes taken by one of Proclus' pupils during his lessons on the *Chaldean Oracles* than a Commentary in the style of the Platonic ones (though it is of course possible that they reflect Proclus' treatise to a large extent). Proclus then comments on lines 2 and 3 of fragment 1 des Places, saying that if one leans on intellections (νοεραῖς ἐπιβολαῖς) – which, though simple (ἁπλαῖ), are still based on 'a certain proportion of form and knowledge' (κατά τι μέτρον εἴδους καὶ γνώσεως ἐπιβλητικῶς) – to achieve union with the One (εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο συναφήν), he will, as the Oracles say, '**never be able to think of it**' ('οὐκ ἐκεῖνο νοήσεις'). This is so, Proclus explains, because the Intellect's intellections, though simple in themselves, are also manifold, which implies that they have moved away from the absolute oneness of the One. In addition, by being 'intellectual' (νοεραί), they not only are below the One but also below the 'intelligible' (νοητόν) dimension of the Platonic Ideas, which they are however able to grasp. Since the One transcends Intellect, it can be grasped by the 'flower of the soul' only, that is, by what is 'one' in the Soul, or, in other words, by the oneness that establishes the soul as 'one' being. Proclus ends his explanations here, to reiterate that the 'flower of Intellect' is incapable of achieving union with the One since this, differently from both the Intellect and the intelligible dimension, is unconnected with anything and imparticipable (ἀσύντακτον πρὸς πάντα καὶ ἀμέθεκτον). In this respect, Proclus says, the One is superior to the Chaldean Father (which for him coincided with the first member of the first intelligible triad and, at an inferior level, with the Demiurge), because, while the Father according to fragment 3 des Places needs 'to "snatch Himself away" from Intellect and "Power"' (ἁρπάζειν 'ἑαυτόν' λέγεται τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῆς 'δυνάμεως'), the One already transcends both, being 'God of everything' (θεὸς πάντων), including the first Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect. To further stress the inferior nature of the Chaldean Father compared with the One, Proclus also quotes fragment 175 des Places: '**and primal Power of the sacred Word**'. He interprets the adjective 'primal' (πρώτην) as if it referred to the Father, called 'primal' (πρώτιστος) in his exegesis, though the fragment patently refers this attribute to Power, second member of the first Chaldean triad, not to the Father; then, further distorting the literal meaning of the fragment for the sake of his own argument that aims at showing the superiority of the One over the Father, Proclus attributes the adjective 'sacred' (ἱερός) to the Father too, not to the Word, as a more literal exegesis would have dictated, this time to show that it is the One that makes the Father 'sacred'. Finally, Proclus says that the 'Word' of fragment 3 des Places, which he seems to regard as an inferior manifestation of the One (this is not named explicitly but

Proclus refers to it as 'he who has appeared as unspeakable' [ὁ ἐκφαίνων ἀρρητότερον]) must necessarily be preceded by 'Silence' (σιγή), which, being defined as 'unspeakable henad' (ἀρρητοτέρα ἑνάς) a few lines below, must be regarded as a designation of the One, all the more because Silence is also said to 'precede the intelligibles' (πρὸ τῶν νοητῶν σιγή).

After the exegesis of these oracular sayings, Proclus goes back to the presentation of his own theory of knowledge by differentiating the flower of Intellect from the flower of the whole Soul.[25] According to him, while the former is capable of unifying intellectual powers only, the latter can include those psychic faculties (such as 'reason, opinion, attention, choice') that the flower of Intellect leaves out because of their inferior nature compared with intellectual ones. Therefore, though Soul is inferior to Intellect, its 'flower' or principle of unification is superior to the intellectual one since it leads back to unity more aspects of the Soul than those reached by the unifying power of Intellect. This must be understood on the basis of the Proclean principle according to which a superior cause produces and leads back to itself a greater number of effects compared with inferior ones (*Elements of Theology*, propositions 57, 60 Dodds), doing this through the process of reversion (ἐπιστροφή) (*Elements of Theology*, proposition 31 and especially 35 Dodds). This means that the flower of the Soul is the truest manifestation of the One in man.

The one in us, Proclus says, is both flower, as we have already seen, but also centre around which all the soul's powers revolve; but when, as Proclus points out, this type of flower and centre is intellectual (νοερὸν γάρ ἐστιν ἕν), it is capable of bringing man back to the 'Father of intelligibles' only (ἐκεῖνο μόνον ἡμᾶς συνάπτει τῷ πατρὶ τῶν νοετῶν), that is, to the first member of the First intelligible triad that Proclus identifies with the Chaldean Father. To the One only the flower of the whole Soul can lead since it 'brings unity to all things that (are) in us' ([ὅ] μόνον πέφυκε προσάγειν ἡμᾶς τῷ πάντων ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὄντων), thus being a truer and more complete manifestation of the One in us than the flower of Intellect.

C. Guérard has rightly shown that the difference between ἄνθος νοῦ and ἄνθος ψυχῆς does not belong to Proclus' exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles* only, but had a broader impact on his philosophy, being discussed in some of his Platonic Commentaries as well.[26] However, the fact that the concept of ἄνθος ψυχῆς never appears in the extant Chaldean fragments, while that of ἄνθος νοῦ is mentioned three times in total (see fragments 1, 1; 42, 3; 49, 2 des Places), could put into question its Chaldean origin, to the point of considering it as a Proclean innovation not belonging as such to the text of the Oracles.

5.4.5 Extract n. 5

The fifth and last extract is the only one where no Chaldean fragment is quoted. 'The Oracles' (τὰ λόγια) are mentioned here by Proclus in general terms because

for them 'the estrangement from the gods and the return to them' depends on the oblivion and remembrance of paternal symbols (τῶν θείων συνθημάτων), in the same sense in which for 'philosophy' the same phenomenon concerns 'eternal reasons-principles', with which then Proclus makes Chaldean *symbola* and *synthemata* coincide. The relevant aspect here is for Proclus the agreement of Chaldean doctrine with Platonic philosophy, which fact he explains by pointing out that Soul 'exists from sacred reason-principles and divine symbols' (ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν θείων συμβόλων): the former being inferior manifestations in the Soul of intellectual Ideas (οἱ μέν εἰσιν ἀπὸ τῶν νοερῶν εἰδῶν) as they preexist in the intellectual Demiurge that conveys them to the World Soul and this in turn to individual souls; the latter coming instead from 'the divine henads' (τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων ἑνάδων). According to this explanation, reason-principles and divine *symbola* in some way mirror each other even if Proclus does not seem to establish a perfect identity between them; *symbola* are in fact superior to reason-principles insofar as they come from the gods/henads and not from the Demiurge and, differently from reason-principles, do not seem to have the specific function of shaping matter.[27]

Through the principle of oneness that it contains in itself, the Soul is then capable of leading both the multiple reason-principles and the symbols of the gods back to unity, making use of them to move away from multiplicity and back to the absolute unity of the First Principle. However, at this point a problem arises: if each individual soul possesses the same reason-principles and divine symbols, what differentiates them? Proclus answers this objection by saying that even if a soul 'is full of the same reason-principles' (κἂν τῶν αὐτῶν ᾖ λόγων πλήρης), and, by extension, of the same divine symbols, it 'possesses only one Form that differentiates it from others; for example the solar Form characterizes the solar soul and, another (Form), another (type of soul)'.

The mention by Proclus of the 'solar soul', that is, of the souls which share in with each other as well as with the sun and the divine principles superior to them the solar Form (τὸ ἡλιακὸν εἶδος), links Proclus' *On Chaldean Philosophy* with his treatise *On the Sacred Art*,[28] where the efficacy of theurgic rituals is explained by him through the principle of universal sympathy. This binds together things that are different but belong to the same 'chain' or σειρά, so that by making use of one or more members of the chain, for example of the inferior ones which are more accessible to him, the theurgist can come into contact with the power of superior ones, which would otherwise have remained utterly inaccessible to him.[29]

Notes

1 Greek text: É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 206–212 = J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, vol. 5 (Rome-Paris, 1888), 192–195.

2 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 203.

3 É. des Places (id., *Oracula chaldaica*, 202) lists the following more recent witnesses: Barb. = Barberinianus graecus 65, 17th century, ff. 147–159, which is a transcription of the recto of V by Holstenius; P = Parisinus graecus 1182, 13th

century, ff. 162 r° and 164 r° – v°, which was used by Kroll to collate the passages that appear in his edition of the Oracles.

4 É. des Places ed., *Oracula chaldaica*, 202.

5 On this, see also D. J. O' Meara, *Psellos'* Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles *and Proclus' Lost Commentary*, in H. Seng ed., *Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischen Mittelater und italienischer Renaissance* (Heidelberg, 2013), 45–56.

6 Who entitles the extracts 'Extraits du commentaire de Proclus sur la philosophie chaldaïque'.

7 Marinus, *Vita Procli sive de felicitate*, R. Masullo ed. (Naples, 1985), 26, 610–619.

8 Ibid., 26, 611.

9 Ibid., 26, 620–631.

10 Ibid., 631–635.

11 Suda, *Lexicon*, IV. 210, 5–22; 478, 21–479, 8 Adler.

12 On this, see H. D. Saffrey, *Accorder entre elles le traditions théologiques: une caractéristique du néoplatonisme athénienne*, in Bos-Mejier eds., *On Proclus and His Influence* (1992), 36–37.

13 We have followed des Places' numeration of the extracts. The Chaldean fragments from des Places' edition quoted in the extracts are in bold typeface.

14 É. des Places ed., *Excerpta e Proclo de philosophia chaldaica*, 206–207, 5–20 = J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, 192, 12–25.

15 Ibid., 207–208, 5–25 = Ibid., 193, 1–15.

16 Ibid., 208–209, 5–25 = Ibid., 193, 10–25–194, 1–5.

17 Ibid., 209–211, 1–69 = Ibid., 194, 5–30–195, 1–15.

18 Ibid., 211–212, 1–25 = Ibid., 195, 20–30.

19 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 184.

20 H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (2011), 373–374 and notes 235–239, where the reader can find a list of sources where the expression 'eye of the soul' is used.

21 With regard to the philological problems related to this fragment, see R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 206.

22 With regard to the problem of the inclination of the soul towards matter in Plotinus and the Gnostics, see N. Spanu, Plotinus, *Ennead II 9 [33] 'Against the Gnostics': A Commentary* (Leuven, 2012), 167–169.

23 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (1989), 180–181.

24 With regard to a comparison of these different types of knowledge in Proclus, see: Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II. 51, 25–28–52, 1–4 (which focuses specifically on *dianoia*). Proclus, *In primum Alcibiades Platonis*, 140, 16–20 Westernik. *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 978, 29–35; 1081 (where rational knowledge is compared with knowledge according to the One) Cousin. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, I. 223, 16–20; 224, 1–7; 242, 27–32; 246, 20–25; 249, 4–10 Diehl. Proclus, *In primum Euclidis elementorum librum commentarii*, 10, 21–28–11, 1–19 Friedlein.

With regard to Proclus' theory of knowledge, we refer the reader to the following studies: M. Bonelli, *Proclus et la dialectique scientifique*, in J.-B. Gourinat–J. Lemaire eds., *Logique et dialectique dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 2016), 397–421. D. D. Butorac, *Proclus' aporetic Epistemology*, in D. A. Layne–D. D. Butorac eds., *Proclus and his Legacy* (Berlin-Boston, 2017), 123–135. C. Helmig, *Proclus on Epistemology, Language and Logic*, in d'Hoine–Martijn, *All from One* (2017), 183–206. D. G. MacIsaac, *Νόησις, dialectique, et mathématique dans le Commentaire aux Élements d'Euclide de Proclus*, in A. Lernould ed., *Études sur le Commentaire de Proclus au Premiere livre des Éléments d'Euclide* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2010), 125–138. J. C. Marler, Proclus on Causal Reasoning: *1 Alcibiades* and the Doctrine of Anamnesis: *The Journal of Neoplatonic Studies* 1 (2)

(1993) 3–35. J. N. Martin, Proclus and the Neoplatonic Syllogistic: *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 30 (2001) 187–240. C. Steel, *Breathing Thought: Proclus on the Innate Knowledge of the Soul*, in Cleary ed., *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism* (1997), 293–307. R. Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (2012), 137–162. L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (1996), 114–206. C. Helmig, *Forms and Concepts: Concept Formation in the Platonic Tradition* (Berlin-Boston, 2012), 205–333 (which is one of the most detailed study on Proclean epistemology currently available).

25 On this, see the following fundamental studies: C. Guérard, *L'hyparxis de l'âme et la fleure de l'intellect dans la mystagogie de Proclus*, in Saffrey–Pépin, *Proclus lecteur et interprète des anciennnes* (1987), 284–297. J. Dillon, *The One of the Soul and the Flower of the Intellect*, in Dillon–Zovko, *Platonism and Forms of Intelligence* (2008), 247–258.

26 C. Guérard, *L'hyparxis de l'âme et la fleure de l'intellect dans la mystagogie de Proclus*, in Saffrey–Pépin, *Proclus lecteur et interprète des anciennnes* (1987), 287, where he quotes the following texts: Proclus, *In Timaeum*, II. 203, 30–204, 13 Diehl; Proclus, *In Cratylum*, 113, 66, 10–12 Pasquali; Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 1071, 25–31 Cousin.

27 With regard to this, see for example Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, V. 18, 65, 26–29–66, 1–18 Saffrey–Westernik. *In Platonis Alcibiadem*, 222, 7–11. Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 626, 24–37 Cousin on the reason-principles in the Soul as images of the Ideas; see also ibid., 794, 826, 9–21, 982. With regard to the reason-principles in the context of Proclus' philosophy of nature, see Proclus, *In Timaeum*, III. 188, 9–10; 191, 7; 193, 2–7; 228, 10–15; 233, 10–20; 273, 11 Diehl and, as far as secondary literature is concerned, the following fundamental study: M. Martijn, *Proclus on Nature: Philosophy of Nature and Its Methods on Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Leiden, 2010).

28 Proclus, *De sacrificio et magia*, in J. Bidez ed., *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, vol. 6 (Brussels, 1928), 148.

29 On this, see I. Tanaseanu-Doebler, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity* (2013), 191–193. C. van Liefferinge, *La Théurgie des Oracles Chaldaïques à Proclus* (1999), 260–261, 269–270. A. Uždavinys, *Philosophy and Theurgy in Late Antiquity* (2014), 221.

Conclusions

We have now reached a point where we can draw some conclusions on the question whether Proclus' exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles* is in line with their original meaning or not. We can answer that Proclus never intentionally distorts, except in the few cases we have pointed out (such as that of fragment 175 and 160 des Places), the original meaning of the Chaldean fragments he quotes. He however interprets them in the context of his own philosophical exegesis of Plato, which was in turn based on the principle according to which the different cultural and religious traditions of the Hellenistic world (such as Greek religion, Orphism, Pythagoreanism, Platonism), including the *Chaldean Oracles*, could all be interpreted as holding the same metaphysical and theological doctrine, even if they expressed it in different ways. To make them agree with these different traditions, Proclus subjects the *Chaldean Oracles* to a level of systematization and rationalization which is certainly alien to them because they are not a philosophical treatise but a revealed text that is only partially based on those fundamental concepts of Platonic philosophy (for example the Good, the world of Ideas, the Demiurge, the soul's fall into the material world etc.) of which Proclus wants to show the agreement with the Oracles, while they also contains conceptions that are not present in Plato or that at least do not have in him the same degree of importance as they have in the Oracles (for example the role given to ritualistic theurgy, to semiabstract entities like the Iynges, the Connectors, the Teletarchs, Aion and Eros or to more personalized ones such as the goddess Hecate or the Father, not to mention the concept of fire as symbol of the First Principle, of clear Heraclitean-Stoic derivation). Proclus' exegesis is then generally correct because he shared with the Oracles the same Platonic background (such as in the case of conceptions like the identification of the Principle with the Platonic Good, the triadic structure of the intelligible dimension or the double nature of the Demiurge). On the other hand, it becomes much more problematic, even if not necessarily wrong, when the conceptual simplicity of Chaldean doctrine clashes with the complexity of Proclus' philosophy: a case in point in this respect is Proclus' confinement of the Chaldean Father to the intelligible dimension, while in the Chaldean

system, as pointed out by Damascius, He plays both the role of supreme monad of the system, probably comparable to the Neo-Platonic One, and of first member of the Chaldean triad Father – Power – Intellect; another case in point is the multiplication of triads in Proclus' system, which does not seem to be a doctrine based on oracular teachings. Of other Chaldean doctrines, like that of prayer for example, we know so little that it is difficult to differentiate the original content from later Neo-Platonic interpretations of it and the same applies to the Chaldean teachings concerning Iynges, Connectors and Teletarchs, the Channels, the vehicle of the soul and its 'flower'. Of course, one must never forget that Proclus' objectives are different from the Oracles', since he makes use of them to show that his philosophical interpretation of Plato is in harmony with what the 'gods' have taught, while the Oracles present themselves as a divine revelation aiming at teaching a restricted elite how man can go back to that divine dimension to which he has forgotten to belong: to achieve this objective the 'gods' can make use of the concepts of Plato's philosophy (as well as of those of other philosophical schools) not because they intend to convince men by having recourse to philosophical arguments, but because philosophical concepts belong to that human conceptual world which the gods must make use of if they want to be understood by men. Therefore, while to build solid philosophical arguments is the main goal of Proclus' enterprise, for the Oracles philosophy is merely a means to an end. This difference of approach between *Proclus and the* Chaldean Oracles must always be considered. Proclus himself seems to be aware of it, since most of the times his quotations from the Oracles come at the end of his philosophical explanations or exegeses of Plato, as if he deemed the Oracles to be able to reach a level of knowledge that will always be precluded to philosophy.

If then all these facts are considered when one wants to establish to what extent Proclus' interpretation of the Oracles is correct and can be used by modern researchers to better understand them, the conclusion that can be reached is that Proclus' exegesis certainly agrees in spirit, even if not always in details, with the original Chaldean doctrine, and most of the times can be used to better understand it. By relying on Proclus and Damascius, as well as to a certain extent on Psellus, we can clarify many aspects of Chaldean doctrine, which would otherwise remain almost incomprehensible to us given the highly fragmentary nature of the system. We have given several proofs of this over the course of this dissertation, so it would be useless to summarize them again here. For example, Proclus' and Damascius' interpretations of the long fragments 37 (preserved by Proclus) and 1 (by Damascius) could be used to deepen our understanding of the conceptual couple intelligible/intellectual (νοητόν/νοερόν) in the *Chaldean Oracles*.

We think that if a new, major edition of the *Chaldean Oracles* will finally see the light as hoped for by H. Seng, the Neo-Platonic oracular exegesis will have to be necessarily used in order to try to make the original Chaldean teachings emerge from their oblivion.

Synopsis of Chaldean and Proclean systems

The Chaldean Oracles	*Proclus*
The Supreme Principle	*The Supreme Principle*
The ineffable One – the Father	The One Limit – Unlimited – the Mixed/the henads
Chaldean Triad Father: Father Power/higher Hecate Intellect First transcendent fire First Intellect Demiurgic Intellect	**The three intelligible triads** 1 The first intelligible triad 2 The second intelligible triad 3 The third intelligible triad
Inferior triads Faith – Truth – Eros The Iynges The Connectors The Teletarchs	**The intelligible and intellectual triads** 1 The first intelligible and intellectual triad 2 The second intelligible and intellectual triad 3 The third intelligible and intellectual triad
Inferior single divine hypostases Chronos and Rhea Aion and Time Eros The girdling membrane and lower Hecate	**The intellectual hebdomad** 1 The intellectual triad Chronos – Rhea – Zeus 2 The three immaculate gods (the Curetes) 3 The separating monad
The dimension of the Soul World Soul	**The World Soul and the World Intellect**
The hyper-cosmic gods Azonoi	**The hyper-cosmic gods** 1 The demiurgic triad (Zeus II – Poseidon – Ades) 2 The life-bearing Triad (Artemis – Persephone – Athena) 3 The reflexive triad (Triple-winged Apollo) 4 The immaculate triad (the Corybantes) **The hyper-encosmic gods** 1 The demiurgic triad (Zeus III – Poseidon II – Hephaestus) 2 The immaculate triad (Hestia – Athena II – Ares) 3 The life-bearing triad (Demeter II – Hera II – Artemis II) 4 The elevating triad (Hermes – Aphrodite II – Apollo II)

The Chaldean Oracles	*Proclus*
The material world	**The material world**
Matter	Matter
The four elements	The four elements
The planetary gods or zonaioi	**The encosmic gods: the fixed stars and the seven planets:**
	1 Chronos (Saturn)
	2 Zeus (Jupiter)
	3 Ares (Mars)
	4 Helios (Sun)
	5 Aphrodite (Venus)
	6 Hermes (Mercury)
	7 Selene (Moon)
Angels and daemons	**Angels, daemons and heroes**
	The sublunar deities:
	1 Uranus – Gaia
	2 Ocean – Tethys
	3 Chronos – Rhea
	4 Phorcys
	5 Zeus IV – Hera III
	The terrestrial deities
	The subterranean deities
Man	**Man**

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